



Meeting was called to order by Dylan Klapmier at 7:05pm

Attendance: John Andrew, Tim Chisman, Diana Hammer, Nancy Perry, Ben Kuiper, Mike Rooney, Sumner Sharpe, Margaret Strachan, Colleen Murphy, Dylan Klapmeier, Ryan Schwochert TJ Lehman, Joseph Lehman, Steve Allen, Jamie Dwyer, Susan Steffens, Bob Habeck, Chelly Hasquet
Peggy Benkelman(coordinator)

Excused: Pat Marron, Gary Dalton, Tom Woodgerd, Samson Boyd, David Beach, Denise Roth-Barber, Jason Welnel, Ben Kennedy,

Guests: Dr. Gregory Thomas

A Quorum was established

Public Comments on Non-Agenda Items – None

Meeting Called to Order by Dylan Klapmeier at 7:08

Dylan K. states this is a special meeting to discuss the HCC's budget recommendation document to be forwarded to the City Commission. The purpose of the meeting is to resolve questions/issues that were brought forward from the 5/13/21 meeting regarding different funds and the recommendation. The HCC meets today to take a final vote on the Budget Recommendation document.

The HCC's involvement with the city budget this year was very different from previous years. The HCC was not permitted to attend the individual department sessions. The HCC's budget recommendation will be officially presented on June 7th to the Commission and then adopted at the end of June.

HCC Budget Discussion:

Nancy Perry – head of the budget committee – reiterates that every HCC member was sent the “changes document” before this meeting and they had time to review it. The document shows the before and after of funds that had substantive changes from the HCC's discussions at the 5/13/21 meeting. Dylan K. reminds HCC members that the budget document is a consensus document.

The Changes document is attached to these minutes.

Fund #521 Water and Waste Water Fund #531 Wastewater additions/changes are presented by Dianna Hammer and Sumner Sharpe. The “after” portion written by Dianna H. adds more detail about optimization and water efficiency. It includes the importance of a Water Masterplan. An explanation of where Helena's water comes from is also included. The Waste Water Fund also needs a comprehensive fund developed with conservation in mind. Sumner S. reminds us that water and fees/bills are often tied together. Sumner S. feels there is a need to address longer- term quality and quantity of water for the region (not just the city). He suggests the formation of a Regional Water Committee. No HCC members express concerns or changes.

Fund #237 - Urban Forestry Fund & Fund #235 - Open Space District Maintenance

This update was written by Bob Habeck. Nancy split the information appropriately into two funds and did not change any of the information. Bob H. comments job well done. No HCC members express concerns or changes.

Fund #406 - TIF Railroad District, Fund #407 – TIF Downtown District – Sumner Sharpe says historically TIF funds were created to encourage development and build a tax base. Sumner reiterates that the funds should be used to bring more life to the downtown walking mall which old and tired. There needs to be a better identified long-term strategy that utilizes both the Railroad and the Downtown TIF funds to promote economic development.

Fund #211 – Civic Center – Nancy Perry wrote the recommendation after listening to steering committee meeting. At the meeting it was promoted to have a non-profit manage the Civic Center, much like the Myrna Loy and GrandStreet Theatre. But during the HCC meeting on 5/13, it was brought up that the comparisons are not the same. Myrna Loy and GrandStreet are performance venues only, while the Civic Center houses city employees, the Fire Station and also leases out spaces for events. John Andrew says he prefers a more balanced approach. The Commission is considering two proposals, one from city staff and one from the steering committee. John likes the idea that the performances are managed by a non-profit, but the building is still owned and managed by the City. Colleen Murphy states that vendor's should not take over the components of the Civic Center. Colleen M. also says it is not that easy to raise money – it may take years. She likes the “after” part of the written recommendation. Sumner Sharpe wants to confirm with John A. that the City would retain ownership of the building and the non-profit would run the programming portion. John A. responds that yes the city staff would keep maintaining the building and the nonprofit would run the programming. Dylan K. suggests the wording “thoughtfully decide” be added. Margaret Strachan wants the city to avoid future problems by having a strong contract between the City and a non-profit.

Fund #226 – Community Development – Written by Steve Allen. The HCC supports the use of the funds in the manner mentioned.

Fund #563 - Bill Roberts Golf Course and Muni’s Restaurant Recommendation – Ben Kuiper wrote the recommendation. Ben K says the Commission is considering moving the bond expenditure to the General Fund. Another option is to leave it where it is and keep covering the losses – which is not good fiscal policy. Ryan Schwochert says it is expected that in the future, the golf course can cover its expenses. Ryan S. suggests removing the wording “since its opening”. Sumner Sharpe says the Muni’s was to be a revenue bond for funding it, but it was a general obligation bond. Sumner S. adds the golf course should be self-sustaining. Ryan S. also reminds everyone that the area managed by the city is the largest of its parks, it is open to the public and utilized for other purposes such as cross-country skiing. General consensus is the wording on the after part of the recommendation is fine.

Fund #011-1701 Helena Citizens’ Council – Peggy Benkelman wrote the recommendation for the HCC. She says the only real changes are that she asked for more money to cover neighborhood outreach, survey outreach and water bill insert. Dylan Klapmeier suggests the HCC try to have its own place on the city’s BeHeardHelena app. Ryan Schwochert agrees, he thinks a lot of people utilize the site. Sumner Sharpe suggests we leave the \$300 ask for Survey Outreach in the budget. Chelly Hasquet asks if the HCC has researched using other survey tools other than Survey Monkey. Peggy B. responds we have not. Peggy also states the public can communicate directly with HCC through the webpage. It was decided to leave the \$300 survey outreach amount in the budget.

Fund #100 - General Fund – Written by Diana Hammer. Recommendation is made to continue to support the Annual Sun Run in the amount of \$1000K. The Sun Run supports renewable energy projects. This year's money will go towards solar panels on the new Bryant and Jim Darcy grade schools. Consensus from the HCC is to continue to support this project.

Fund #100-011 - General Government Fund – Written by Diana Hammer

ICLEI (International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives) provides technical consulting to local governments to meet sustainability objectives. For \$600/yr the City of Helena gets great tracking software where they can see their energy use savings. The HCC agrees with the recommendation. Bob Habeck asks if the numbers mentioned came from the City – Diana H. says yes. Bob H. replies, he is more likely to support if the numbers are the City's. Ryan Schwochert who has worked at updating the parking garages lighting, says the savings are astounding, much more than were anticipated.

Fund #238 – Loan Repayment Fund – The HCC has to vote on one or the other of the write-ups. Dylan Klapmeier explains procedure here: since the two recommendations are contradictory, the HCC can include both in the recommendation, or the HCC can vote and take a stand on either write-up one or write-up two.

Write-up One – by Ben Kuiper. In regards to the Solar Fund, the city can lose approximately 3% per year due to inflation because of the loan being 0%. He feels a low percent loan would cover these losses. There have been 30 loans since December of 2015, and currently there is \$180,000 sitting in the Solar Loan Account. Ben K. feels demand is low.

Write-up Two – Dianna Hammer – Dianna feels the city should keep the 0% loan rate. She feels the reason there is \$180,000 in the loan account is because there has been no Public Information Officer in the city for over a year to promote the program. Now that the Federal and State Tax credits for renewable energy are being cut, it is more important than ever to keep the loan rate at 0%. Sumner Sharpe says this low rate could also help those citizens who could not afford a higher rate to install energy saving devices in the home. Tim Chisman states that there have been many times (because he has applied repeatedly) that the Solar Fund has been out of money. He is surprised it now has \$180,000.

Ben Kuiper says that relying on the Commission to introduce funding when needed to the Solar Fund could introduce risk. Dylan Klapmeier thinks the City should research more closely their Loan programs and how to keep them sustainable. Margaret Strachan feels all the loan programs should be consistent – e.g. sidewalks, solar and sewer should all charge 0% for example. Tim Chisman says when he used the solar program and sold his house, the loan had to be paid off for the sale to close, however with the sidewalk program, the new owner takes on the loan through their property tax. Tim C. likes write-up #2 and sees it as a big encouragement for homeowners to get energy savings. Dianna H. said write-up #2 is following the direction of both the city manager and the Commission. The 0% loan program is something to be proud of and unique in Montana. Jamie Dwyer said one of her constituents feels strongly about continuing the 0% loan program and supports write-up #2.

Motion – Tim Chisman makes a motion to support write-up #2 and include it in the HCC budget recommendation. Dianna Hammer seconds the motion.

Dylan Klapmeier says he is opposed to this motion and would rather table it for future meetings, but the motion has been made and seconded. A voice vote was taken and the majority votes to accept write-up #2 in the Loan Repayment Fund.

Ben Kuiper refers back to the Community Development Fund #226 and wants to remove ARPA funds. Dylan K, Nancy Perry and Sumner Sharpe agree to remove ARPA funds wording. No HCC disagrees with the removal of this wording.

Dylan K. brings up the original HCC budget recommendation document onto the Zoom screen for a vote. Dylan K. asks if there are any overall questions or concerns regarding this budget document which will include the “afters” on the changes document (attached). No concerns mentioned. A motion is made by Colleen Murphy to approve and seconded by Sumner Sharpe. Dylan K. asks: “ All in favor of adopting the Helena Citizens’ Council Review and Recommendations Regarding the Fiscal Year 2022 Revised Preliminary City Budget” A voice vote is taken, it is unanimously approved.

Meeting was Adjourned at 9:02 PM

Next Meeting is June 23rd at 7:00pm via Zoom

Changes Document for Discussion at 5/20/21 Meeting

BEFORE – different recommendation for each fund

Fund #521 – Water Fund – The Water Treatment Plant (WTP) requests funds to optimize plant operations with new chemical feed systems and pumps, enabling them to treat our water using less chemical product, fewer backwashes, and less wastewater. Requested upgrades to the PreSettlement Building (natural gas heater and primary and secondary HVAC systems) would save 25-50% in natural gas and other costs. In addition to improving the current water supply system, WTP is developing a Master Water Plan for future (next 25 years) water supplies, sources, needs.

Recommendation: Increased water supply capacity is essential as Helena’s population increases. HCC recommends the City proactively expand its capacity now so that it will be ready for possible city annexation. More funds may need to be directed to the Water Fund to optimize the WTP facility’s ability to satisfy future demands for potable water.

Fund #531 – Wastewater Fund – Staff and management at the Waste Water Treatment Facility (WWTF) continue to look for opportunities to conserve energy and water resources. They requested funding for a standby generator and other equipment (e.g., roll-off containers, secondary sampler, etc.). The WWTF is also developing a Waste Water Collection Master Plan

to take a holistic look at the wastewater collection, sources, volumes, treatment of wastewater to effectively plan for future scenarios.

Recommendation: Increased wastewater treatment capacity is essential as Helena’s population increases. HCC recommends the City proactively expand its capacity now so that it will be ready for possible city annexation. More funds may need to be directed to the Wastewater Fund to optimize the WWTF facility’s ability to satisfy future demands for treatment of wastewater.

AFTER - one recommendation for both funds

Fund #521 – Water Fund – The Water Treatment Plant (WTP) requests funds to optimize plant operations with new chemical feed systems and pumps, enabling them to treat our water using less chemical product, fewer backwashes, and less wastewater. Requested upgrades to the PreSettlement Building (natural gas heater and primary and secondary HVAC systems) would save 25-50% in natural gas and other costs. In addition to improving the current water supply system, WTP is developing a Master Water Plan for future (next 25 years) water supplies, sources, and needs. A comprehensive Water Master Plan should consider the needs and interests of current and future City residents, including those in areas adjacent to Helena. Helena currently relies on two sources of water: Upper Ten Mile and the Missouri River, both of which have certain vulnerabilities (fire, lack of snowpack, harmful algal blooms, etc.). Helena could add groundwater as its third potable water source. Decreasing consumption is the other half of the equation that can allow Helena to better meet its future water needs.

Fund #531 – Wastewater Fund – Staff and management at the Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF) continue to look for opportunities to conserve energy and water resources. They requested funding for a standby generator and other equipment (e.g., roll-off containers, secondary sampler, etc.). The WWTF is also developing a Wastewater Master Plan to take a holistic look at the wastewater collection, sources, volumes, and treatment of wastewater to effectively plan for future scenarios.

Recommendation: Planning for future water quantity and quality and wastewater treatment is critical as population growth continues throughout the region. The City Master Plan is needed to address the needs of the City’s projected population. In addition, a longer-range (time and geographic) study is needed to address future roles and responsibilities for serving regional needs and the City’s role in addressing these needs, if any.

The City Water/Wastewater Master Plan should consider climate change and its effect on flooding, reduced snow pack, drought, and fire needs. The plan should consider protecting the City’s existing supply sources such as Ten-Mile, Missouri River, and groundwater. The plan should also address reducing future demand through education, incentives, and disincentives. Finally, the plan should address finding needed funding such as by increasing water/sewer rates as well as supporting other funding sources.

The regional longer-term (20-30 years) analysis of water quantity and quality and wastewater treatment should be based on the existing and future demands of regional growth, the geographic extent of that growth, the impacts of climate change, impacts of growth on groundwater sources, maintenance of water quality, and future water supply sources. This regional study should be funded by and include representatives from the City, County, business/industry, existing conservation and other districts, and the public. It should address

the future demand on these systems, the costs of meeting these demands, who pays, and the pros and cons of ways to meet the demand – such as extending City services, forming a regional water/wastewater district, forming a number of independent districts, incorporation of another municipality, privatizing the system, etc.

BEFORE - written as a single fund

Fund #237 - Urban Forestry Fund – For Helena, surrounded by open lands and forest, wildfire is a real threat. As more land is included in our open space portfolio, wildfire mitigation becomes a priority. Wildfire on land and forest surrounding the city is the responsibility of the County, USFS, and DNRC. While Helena can count on a mutual-aid response from those agencies should wildfire spread to city property, landowners too must be prepared to respond to wildfire. With that in mind, the Fire Department has purchased wildland fire vehicles (Type 6 engines).

To prevent new wildfire, the Parks & Recreation Department has employed several measures, largely to reduce the amount of fuel on the forest floor. The Tri-County Fire Safe Working Group educates citizens about wildfire and the measures they can take to mitigate forest fuel on their property. The city should continue to work with this organization and, if necessary, contribute funding and staff time. An effort in the past using goats to eat toad-flax weeds also served to reduce fuels that aid in wildfire spread. Poor forest health, caused by the depredations of insects and disease, should also be studied. Appropriating funding for forest-fuel thinning is a major objective of Parks & Recreation. The city receives grants to help pay for contract thinning crews and equipment. The city should continue to leverage these grants to offset city budget commitments.

Recommendations: 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. Support the Urban Forestry Department’s efforts to proactively replace our aging Ash Trees ahead of the Emerald Ash Borer threat. Support the department’s efforts to work with Growing Friends and others to increase the canopy cover in the 6th Ward. Provide additional administrative support so foresters and arborists can concentrate on forestry and spend less time on administrative tasks.

AFTER - broken into two funds

Fund #235 - Open Space District Maintenance - For Helena, surrounded by open lands and forest, wildfire is a real threat. As more land is included in our open space portfolio, wildfire mitigation becomes a priority. Wildfire on land and forest surrounding the city is the responsibility of the County, USFS, and DNRC. To prevent new wildfire, the Parks & Recreation Department has employed several measures, largely to reduce the amount of fuel on the forest floor. The Tri-County Fire Safe Working Group educates citizens about wildfire and the measures they can take to mitigate forest fuel on their property. The city should continue to work with this organization and, if necessary, contribute funding and staff time. An effort in the past using goats to eat toad-flax weeds also served to reduce fuels that aid in wildfire spread. Poor forest health, caused by the depredations of insects and disease, should also be studied. Appropriating funding for forest-fuel thinning is a major objective of Parks &

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Fund #237 - Urban Forestry Fund – While Helena can count on a mutual-aid response from the County, USFS, and DNRC should wildfire spread to city property, landowners too must be prepared to respond to urban wildfire. With that in mind, the Fire Department has purchased wildland fire vehicles (Type 6 engines).

Recommendations: Support the Urban Forestry Department’s efforts to proactively replace our aging Ash Trees ahead of the Emerald Ash Borer threat. Support the department’s efforts to work with Growing Friends and others to increase the canopy cover in the 6th Ward. Provide additional administrative support so foresters and arborists can concentrate on forestry and spend less time on administrative tasks.

BEFORE

Fund #406 - TIF Railroad District, Fund #407 – TIF Downtown District - The Railroad Urban Renewal District was created by the Commission in January 2016 by ordinance 3214. The Railroad TIF District encompasses a large area of property bordering the MRL railroad. The State Department of Revenue approved it effective January 1, 2016. The Downtown Urban Renewal District was created by the City Commission in September 2018 by ordinance 3242. The Downtown TIF District encompasses a large area of property commonly known as Downtown Helena. The state Department of Revenue approved it effective January 1, 2019. Both of these TIF districts will last 15 years unless debt is issued that could extend it for the life of the debt or 40 years, whichever is shorter.

Recommendation: The HCC recommends that the city develop a plan to identify a long-term strategy that utilizes the railroad and downtown TIF funds to promote economic development. This plan should aim to proactively address issues rather than handle them as they arise. A portion of the revenues should be set aside to address unexpected issues, but some should be earmarked for specific problems that have been identified as a hamper on economic development.

AFTER

Fund #406, TIF Railroad District / Fund #407, TIF Downtown District - The Railroad Urban Renewal District was created by the Commission in January 2016 by ordinance 3214. The Railroad TIF District encompasses a large area of property bordering the MRL railroad. The State Department of Revenue approved it effective January 1, 2016. The Downtown Urban Renewal District was created by the City Commission in September 2018 by ordinance 3242. The

Downtown TIF District encompasses a large area of property commonly known as Downtown Helena. The state Department of Revenue approved it effective January 1, 2019. Both of these TIF districts will last 15 years unless debt is issued that could extend it for the life of the debt or 40 years, whichever is shorter.

Recommendation: One of the primary goals of TIF funding is to increase the underlying taxes so when the TIF District ends, the increased property tax income, anticipated to be more than if the TIF district was not formed, would be shared with other taxing districts. Consequently, the HCC recommends the city develop a plan to identify a long-term strategy that utilizes the railroad and downtown TIF funds to promote economic development. This plan should aim to proactively address issues or needs rather than respond to them as they are requested. Some portion of the revenues should be set aside to address specific district needs or issues, but funds should be earmarked to address specific needs or problems that are identified as a hamper on economic development and the tax base in the district. One specific instance is the Downtown Master Plan’s recommendation about the need to upgrade the walking mall – sidewalks and other surfaces, painting, maintenance, etc. Downtown is the City’s center of small business and a major tax base, and enhancement of the mall will help to attract more visitors and attract new business to vacant store fronts and buildings. This could include looking at the “entertainment space” and options for its use or future infill development.

BEFORE

Fund #211 – Civic Center - Because it lacks air conditioning, the Civic Center remains dark all summer. It was closed most of 2020 because of the pandemic. A steering committee was appointed to determine the facility’s path forward. After studying many similar facilities in similarly sized cities, they proposed allowing a nonprofit advisory body to lease, operate and manage the building while the City maintains ownership. The nonprofit can do strategic planning and fund raising in ways that the City cannot, employing tax exemptions, grants, individual donations, partnerships, naming rights, rentals, and sponsorships. The nonprofit could take from five to ten years to become totally independent of City subsidies. The City Commission will decide whether or not to allow the Civic Center to be managed by a nonprofit created by the City.

Recommendation: The HCC recommends that the City Commission allow the Civic Center to be managed by a nonprofit.

AFTER

Fund #211 - Civic Center - Because it lacks air conditioning, the Civic Center remains dark all summer. It was closed most of 2020 because of the pandemic. A steering committee was appointed to determine the facility’s path forward. After studying many similar facilities in similarly sized cities, they proposed allowing a nonprofit advisory body to lease, operate and manage the building while the City maintains ownership. The nonprofit could do strategic planning and fund raising in ways that the City cannot, employing tax exemptions, grants, individual donations, partnerships, naming rights, rentals, and sponsorships. However, the nonprofit could take from five to ten years to become totally independent of City subsidies. The steering committee compared the Civic Center to other City owned venues currently run by non-profits, including the Myrna Loy and Grandstreet Theater. They admitted that the

situations are not comparable because the Civic Center is not simply an entertainment venue, it also houses Fire Station #1. The City Commission will decide whether or not to allow the Civic Center to be managed by a nonprofit created by the City.

Recommendation: The HCC recommends that the City Commission takes its time to thoughtfully decide whether to allow the Civic Center to be managed by a nonprofit. Meanwhile, the manager of the Civic Center should work to maximize usage of the building. As soon as it is fiscally possible, air conditioning should be added to make the building usable year-round.

BEFORE

Fund 226 – Community Development - Accounts for Community Development Block Grant and HOME (Home Investment Partnership Program) grant projects. Appropriations are added as approved by the Commission.

Recommendation: pending

AFTER

Fund 226 – Community Development - Annual Federal Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) are used for capital projects such as structures, infrastructure, facilities and low-income housing and must meet specific criteria for using these funds. CDBG funds can be allocated by the City to public and non-profit agency service providers. Proposed uses of CDBG funds, ARPA funds, and any local Community Development funds mentioned during discussions were for additions of more affordable housing units, an update and rehabilitation of the Stewart Homes complex operated by HHA, a transitional shelter for women and families, and additional housing for elderly populations, populations with special needs and homeless youth, and a mental health facility.

Recommendation: The HCC supports use of local and CDBG funds for these purposes.

BEFORE

Fund #563 - Bill Roberts Golf Course and Muni’s Restaurant Recommendation - – Accounts for the operation and maintenance of the Bill Robert’s Golf Course and Muni’s restaurant.

Recommendation: pending

AFTER

Fund #563 - Bill Roberts Golf Course and Muni’s Restaurant - Golf maintenance, golf & restaurant operation, debt service and capital programs are fully funded through user fees including greens fees, merchandise sales, restaurant sales and tournaments.

As with many entertainment and recreational venues, the Golf fund has struggled with revenues in the midst of COVID-19. The management team has done everything they can to provide a safe and fun environment for the citizens of Helena to enjoy.

The city issued \$2.1 Million of bonds in FY18 to finance a new pro shop, new clubhouse and to implement ADA compliance upgrades. This resulted in the creation of a full-service restaurant, Muni's, as opposed to the simple menu of the previous clubhouse. The restaurant has received positive reviews and is poised to contribute to the self-supporting operation in a large way.

Recommendation: The HCC recommends that the City approves the transfer of the outstanding bond repayment expense attributable to Muni’s from Fund 563 to the General Fund. Since the loss to Fund 563 from the bond repayment expense is already covered by the General Fund, the

HCC believes it appropriate that the General Fund assumes the liability for the bond repayment. The HCC encourages the city to consider all operations at Bill Roberts Gold Course to become self-sustaining.

VOTE WHETHER OR NOT TO INCLUDE EACH OF THE FOLLOWING

NEW

Fund #011-1701 Helena Citizens' Council

Recommendation: The HCC Budget Committee has agreed with the Preliminary Budget with some additions. Personnel Services at \$26894 which includes a cost-of-living increase and raise, \$650 for Supplies and Materials, Total Purchased Services at \$4615 which includes increases in other contracted services (\$700 Neighborhood Outreach, \$300 Survey Outreach, \$650 Water Bill insert). Total for Helena Citizens' Council is \$32779.

NEW

Fund #100 - General Fund

The Sun Run is a long-standing community event (first Saturday in October) to raise awareness and funds in support of renewable energy projects. Funds raised previously have been used to purchase and install solar arrays on the Lewis and Clark Public Library, Carroll College, and the new Central Elementary School. Future projects include funding to purchase and install solar panel arrays at the new Bryant and Jim Darcy Elementary Schools.

Recommendation: The HCC recommends the City Commission continue its support for the Sun Run in FY22. (\$1000)

NEW

Fund #100-011 - General Government Fund

To continue to support the City's efforts to save money and resources, the city has been a member of ICLEI for the past few years. ICLEI provides training, systems tracking, and other resources to help Helena improve its energy and resource efficiency (which saves funds). As an additional part of the City's sustainability efforts, a small amount of funding could be used to hold community meetings to raise awareness and promote conservation measures. In support of the implementation of the Waste Reduction Resolution (February 2021), there is \$60,000 in the current budget for a Strategic Plan to identify opportunities for waste reduction in the Helena community. There are certain grants which require matching funds and this budget anticipates applying for such grants to leverage City funds. There is on-going coordination to advance the 100% Clean Electricity Goal through Helena's joint work with Missoula City and County and Bozeman and the budget contains funds in support of this inter-local policy development and coordination.

Recommendation: For the FY22 Budget, the HCC recommends the City Commission continue its ICLEI membership (\$600); Sustainability meetings (\$1400), support funding for the Waste Reduction Strategic Plan (\$60,000), support grant matching funds (\$30,000), and inter-local policy development (\$30,000).

CHOOSE ONE WRITE-UP FROM THOSE BELOW

WRITE-UP 1

Fund #238 – Loan Repayment Fund - This fund accounts for repayments of loans made by the city to qualified individuals or organizations. An individual loan was made from the city's Tax Increment District. These loan repayments did not sunset with the end of the Tax Increment Districts on July 1, 2005. The City Commission has also made other funds available for qualified loans which are accounted for in this fund.

Recommendation: The HCC recommends that the City charge an interest rate reasonably comparable to Montana's average annual rate of inflation for all renewable energy loans. The resulting interest revenues should then be reinvested into the fund. Since no interest rate is currently charged, the purchasing power of the principle will decline over time. As a result, the City will need to inject funds into this program periodically if they wish to preserve the purchasing power of the principle. If the losses due to inflation are recuperated through an interest rate, the fund should become self-sustaining.

WRITE-UP 2

Fund #238 – Loan Repayment Fund - This fund accounts for repayments of loans made by the city to qualified individuals or organizations such as Helena's unique Alternative Energy Loan Program where zero-interest loans are made to successful applicants and those loans are paid back over up to a 10-year period as part of the property's tax assessment. This is a revolving loan so as the loan is repaid, the funds return to the Loan Program. To date, 28 homeowners have participated in this program, installing solar panels at their residences. The current budget anticipates additional funding (\$60,000) to this popular program.

Recommendation: The HCC recommends that the City continue to support the successful Alternative Energy Loan program and invest additional funds to increase the number of residents able to participate in this program at any given time.

