

City Council Work Session

5:30 PM
Council Chambers
Tuesday, February 20, 2018

ATTENDANCE:

Mayor/Council (please check) X Mayor Cole, X Cromley, X Yakawich, X Ewalt, X Brewster, X Joy, X Friedel, X Gibbs, X Ronning, X Clark, X Brown.
CM excused:

ADJOURN TIME: 10:20 PM

Agenda

TOPIC #1	Oath of Office – Swearing in Ceremony (Reg Gibbs)
PRESENTER	Mayor Cole
NOTES/OUTCOME	

TOPIC #2	Downtown Strategic Plan and OBSC
PRESENTER	
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- Katy Easton, Downtown Billings Alliance: introduction and brief overview.
- Dustin Lester, Thomas P. Miller Associates: thanks key people and groups. Community involvement and input. Four primary goals – sustainable downtown billings alliance/a vibrant and connected 24-hour downtown/strong downtown identity/diverse economic engine. Four Transformative initiatives: downtown housing/ inclusion of diverse cultures/ multi-modal streets and connectivity/mixed-use multi-anchor development. Three Strategic recommendations: Downtown Billings Alliance sustainability/ downtown billings alliance programming/downtown billings alliance partnerships.
- Cole: prioritize? Each initiative has a partner matrix and time frames
- Brewster: multi-modal and connectivity – work with MDT so commuter traffic is handled.
- Maisie Sulser, DBA Development Director: example on page 43 – convert 1 way streets to 2 way streets – good example from the plan.
- Cole: has tribal leadership been engaged in discussion of American Indian center? Easton: no, but partners are identified and we must engage them.
- Yakawich: appreciate past events; worried about downtown (22 open offices/spaces), getting worse? Owners engaged? Lester: engaged, legacy

ownership can be a problem, railroad and change of use decisions, need to continue dialogue, move property owners forward.

- Yakawich: lots of low income housing near downtown, quiet outside of Broadway, downtown lacks traction? Lester: hard issues, need to work with partners, commuter parking should be on the garage roofs.
- Cole: survey of buildings and open spaces? Good data gathered, need to get it into a comprehensive report.
- Cromley: list of buildings for sale. 24-hour downtown meaning? Residential brings opportunity for 24-hour business.
- Ronning: October gathering was primary info gathering? July and Oct were the 2 primary events. Downtown shuttle opportunities? No details in this plan but data are available in other recent reports.
- Brown: a lot of the future in plan depends on the OBSC; what happens if it doesn't succeed? OBSC is in only in one section of plan, lots of connections in plan. Compliment Lisa Harmon, but need a plan B.
- Joy: primary industries missing from downtown? Continue health care and financial center, outdoor recreation.
- Cole: communities provide free wifi? Unused hotspots or individual networks. Public/private partnerships.
- Brief discussion of status of OBSC.
- Bruce McCandless, Interim City Administrator: DBA, Chamber have put together substantial amount of money. Will be large reliance on City. Could use tax increment. Up to \$100,000 from general fund to commit to Hammes.
- Yakawich: community meeting for citizens? Was discussed with Big Sky EDA, no dates set.
- **Public comments**
- Kevin Nelson, 4235 Bruce Avenue, Billings, Montana: have the same cast working on the project. Going backwards. Current organizations have failed to draw enough economic development and population. 1% growth. 12.8% billings population below poverty level, higher than the county.

TOPIC #3	Finance CAFR Report
PRESENTER	
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- Andy Zoeller, Interim Finance Director: introduces the presenter – Tyler Bryant, auditor from JCCS. GFOA certificate of achievement again for 2016 report. Auditor report – describes scope of audit. Reports a “clean” audit. Balance sheet for the whole and individual funds. \$98.9MM unrestricted assets. Single audit results are good.
- Cole: rough idea of cash on hand and investment return? Can we compare this report to prior years? Don't know exact cash on hand. Conservative investments policy. Trends are shown at rear of the report. Budget has more comparisons, at least for past two fiscal years.
- Brown: auditor mainly looking at procedures? Depends on the Fund being reviewed. Look at detailed material as well as procedures and controls.

- Clark: unrestricted GF reserves up or down? Added \$1.5M in FY 17.
- Cole: where does net position improvement come from – enterprise or government funds? Don't know.
- **Public comments:**
- None

TOPIC #4	Long Range Master Plan (ESCI) / Fire Department Familiarization
PRESENTER	
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- Bill Rash, Interim Fire Chief: June 2017 hired ESCI. Introduces Lane Wintermute from ESCI.
- Wintermute: urge Council to read the report. Urge Council to adopt the plan. Start with assessing current FD; future service demand projections; service delivery models and costs. Assessment is good; department, well equipped, good people, challenged by future growth and service demands. Short term and long term service strategies. Future: add a station at Hilltop and Topaz and add personnel (3 per shift). 2nd priority – add station at 48th and Hesper, and personnel. Adding both would put 92% of calls within 4 minutes' travel time. 3rd strategy: close 4 fire stations and relocate them. Would put 96% within 4 min. travel time.
- Cole: degree of urgency to locate new facilities? First need to set service response targets. Heights station within 3 years and west end is farther out.
- Ronning: compared to Billings size cities, how do we compare in staffing and facilities, etc. Somewhat lower, but caution about comparing to other cities with different characteristics. Big variable is whether FD transports patients.
- Joy: Wildland urban interface definition? Forest fires have reached homes due to building further into country.
- Yakawich: \$2M station cost + land. How are we doing with fire prevention? Need more people. Won't immediately show up in fewer fires.
- Brown: recommendation to add administrative staff and reviewing policies and procedures? Operating guidelines don't match with training. Very thin in administration. Need to catch up with backlog. Also need one more station and personnel. Will work on getting the plan implemented.
- Ewalt: need priority dispatch. Chief Rash: there are opportunities to dispatch and respond more efficiently.
- Cole: more than 60% EMS calls, maybe 5% fires. Is there a way to charge for EMS responses? There are models, American Medical Response (AMR) is replenishing supplies, but we need to look at other options to be more efficient. Wintermute: a few variations, most departments that respond EMS without transport do not recover response costs.
- Clark: think that AMR/FD response times are about equal? Think FD arrives first on majority of calls. Does AMR run 2 people? Yes, usually Para and EMT. Are call-offs due to AMR arrival and no help needed? Many of these.

- Yakawich: need more help in administration? Yes, only have 1 assistant chief, difficult to have oversight over significant events. Need help with administrative support, cross training.
- Ronning: thankful for services provided, hear what Chief says about department needs.
- **Public comments:**
- Kevin Nelson, 4235 Bruce Avenue, Billings, Montana: page 5 projection of number of fires and seems high. 2020 population projection seems high. Urban group in Zoning – more multi-generational people in homes; far west station isn't needed as much as in higher population concentrations.
- Cole: projections realistic? Yes. Why EMS responses with engines? Engines have entire toolbox and smaller units don't.
- Ewalt: quick response vehicles (QRV) require storage space, larger buildings.
- Joy: homelessness leads to more 911 calls? Yes.
- Ronning: public service announcement: please shovel out fire hydrants.
- **Recess at 8:04, reconvene at 8:10.**

TOPIC #5	Utility Revenues
PRESENTER	
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- Jenifer Duray, Public Works Finance Manager: last year's discussion about rate changes; answer questions with this presentation. Start with rate studies. Cost of services allocates costs to demanded services. Rate setting and rate tiers. Unbilled departments in City costs \$600,000.
- Friedel: why does water have inclining rate and not wastewater? Wastewater flow is more consistent, don't need the peak service equipment that water requires. Average for residential indoors.
- Ewalt: why large reductions and then increases in following year? Because we're required to do it by contract.
- Ewalt: 6 ccf for wastewater – is that as low as it goes? No, it can go to 0
- Yakawich: CAP possibilities – which are you recommending? Possible and recommend partnering with a social service agency. HRDC do it?
- 4 questions
- Brown: can utilities show how much each customer is paying for parks, streets, etc. instead of making them pay for the water. Anything is possible with enough money, but there are options other than changing the bills.
- Cole: which of the 4 issues most time critical? top 3 are critical and CAP is least time sensitive.
- **Public comments:**
- Perry Moller, 716 North 32nd Street, Billings, Montana: discloses rates paid at his residence from 1990+. Neighbors not watering lawns because the water rates are too high. City should have a zone rate. Farther away from plants increases costs. Yakawich: comments? Mumford: spending lots of money to rehab the central city pipes, less rehab money on more remote locations and want to treat all customers the same.

- Council discussion:
- Tiers: Cromley: actually have reduced water usage due to tier system. Brewster: didn't initially support tiers but watch the costs and have reduced water consumption. Keep the tiered rate system.
- FY 19 rates review
- Friedel: can we delay? Could bring back to a work session, could send notice out to customers letting them know of options.
- Clark: when does department need an answer? Could make budget cuts later. Need to get rates approved before June 1.
- Gibbs: Could Council adopt option 1, delay departments paying for water until FY 20? Yes.
- Ewalt: have conservation rates worked? Yes. Even though population has increased, water consumption is stagnant.
- Yakawich: strongly opposed rate increase last year. See advantage of option 1 this year. Address lead pipe issue in exchange for higher rates?
- Cole: consensus that there should be a rate increase, but which option?
- Joy: charging departments would benefit the large users. Could reduce rates for larger users.
- Brewster: is City violating state law that requires everyone pay for their utility usage? Need City Attorney's opinion on it. Will vote to leave it alone if it's legal.
- Brooks: will research and respond. Will also check with other cities. 2-4 weeks to respond.
- Brown: decision to not have certain departments pay was made in 2004. Reasoning? McCandless: budgetary decision, save money for tax supported funds in anticipation of public safety levy.
- Cole: ask PRPL to respond on water consciousness.
- Friedel: how much levy is required to offset the water cost. Duray: have not calculated.
- Ronning: concerned services would need to be cut if they have to pay for water.
- Brown: don't understand budget cuts if departments pay for water.
- Cole: customer assistance program? how to investigate next steps?
- Joy: want to do it, need to find a local partner.
- Yakawich: ask HRDC if they will partner with us.

TOPIC #6	Recycling
PRESENTER	
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- Dave Mumford, Public Works Director: costs and operational differences. Compact florescent bulbs need to go to shed at landfill.
- Clark: have to build a plant to clean WWTP gas for fueling? Yes.
- Cromley: can City encourage recycling by advertising private recycling companies? Currently work with them to provide advertising.
- Cole: Are commercial company's competitors or cooperatives? Could give discount City rates if someone recycles? Currently work with them, help with

advertising and promote them. Provide their information when receive phone calls.

- Ronning: SCRAP takes glass recycling.
- Danny Choriki, 20 Marshall Drive, Billings, Montana: involved with SCRAP project. Very small pilot project, trying to figure out new markets for glass.
- Yakawich: conversation about glass crusher? State used to loan one but no one uses it.
- **Public comments:**
- none

TOPIC #7	City Administrator Contract and Recruiting
PRESENTER	
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- McCandless: review of proposed recruiting schedule and City Administrator agreement. Need term to satisfy City Charter.
- Ewalt: sick leave and vacation change? Would continue as is and roll over.
- McCandless: recruiter does not think they have satisfied contract and would do recruitment for travel costs only. Could hire new recruitment firm or use HR after July.
- Brewster: would rather use new firm, if need to go that route. Hope to review candidates and pick 3 candidates.
- McCandless: Council could hire a recruiter without an RFP, but would be inconsistent with purchasing policy. Staff does not usually use old RFP's.
- Brewster: could use old RFP.
- Cromley: agree with Brewster. Wonder about cost.
- Cole: HR staff gathering information on administrators in other cities? Karla Stanton, HR Director: in the process of that now, almost complete.
- Cole: consensus for new consultant? Yes. How to find? McCandless: assume we could update old RFP. Need to start asap.
- Cole: approve contract for Mr. McCandless at next meeting.
- **Public comments:**
- none

TOPIC #8	Council Discussion
PRESENTER	
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- Yakawich: thanks Mr. Friday for task force training. Mayor's challenge to reduce suicide among Veteran's. Involved in training and will go to DC.
- Cole: Initiative by VA to reduce suicide numbers. Will be a conference in DC. Helena and Billings will participate. Discuss how to use existing programs and get the word out.
- Ronning: address gun violence? Yakawich: already working on program.
- Clark: West End Task Force: March 20 at Faith Chapel 7:00 p.m.

- Cole: addressing boundaries? Clark: trying to get members to come.

TOPIC #9	Public Comment on Items not on the Agenda
PRESENTER	
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- Dennis Ulvestad, 3040 Central Avenue, Billings, Montana: thank you for suicide prevention. Challenge charter limit on elected serving 2 consecutive terms. Should not be allowed to come back after serving. Clark: citizens have right to choose who they want.