

City Council Work Session

5:30 PM
Council Chambers
May 16, 2016

ATTENDANCE:

Mayor/Council (please check) x Hanel, x Cromley, x Yakawich, x Cimmino, x Brewster, x McFadden, x Friedel, x Swanson, x Sullivan, x Clark (at 6:40), x Brown.

ADJOURN TIME: 9:55 pm

Agenda

TOPIC #1	Downtown Billings Improvement District
PRESENTER	Lisa Harmon – Executive Director
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- Ms. Harmon: recently re-established the BID, but here to talk about budget and work plan. Describes zone 1 and zone 2 and services. Introduces board chair Randy Hafer. Overview of downtown costs and needs.
- Cromley: any reactions from property owners about new assessment formula? No, waiting to reveal it until after Council budget presentation.
- Yakawich: DBA assistance – discontinued? What are delinquent assessments? Shouldn't be there. Delinquent or protested tax payments also result in delinquent assessments.
- Sullivan: plans to add more consistent police presence? BID officers are extra to regular beat officers, could probably use 1 more officer. Summer we get bike patrol which helps with presence.
- Cimmino: extra bike patrol costs are paid from where? PD budget. May contract with Billings Clinic for their own officer(s). Working on an MOU.
- Brown: 3% clinic assessment really pay for service? Close to the same assessment as last year but will have to increase if clinic gets a dedicated officer.
- **Public Comment:**
None.
- Yakawich: question for Mr. Hafer: want council to approve a new assessment; what do you think as a downtown property owner? Support it.
- Cimmino: long time supporter of downtown, framework plan, investments, etc.

TOPIC #2	Planning and Community Services
PRESENTER	Candi Millar – Planning and Community Services Director
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- Candi Millar: introduces division managers. Planning and Community Services dept by the numbers. Overview of dept and budget.
- Councilmember Clark joins meeting at 6:40 pm.
- Sullivan: if CE adds officers, how much revenue would they generate? Not much. Maybe 5% of cases go to court, so little revenue there and weed assessment penalties don't add much to GF. There may be ways to generate money but focus is still compliance, not revenue. Could start fining people sooner in clean up process, could shorten time to perform,
- Cimmino: paid \$90k for building inspection program and it doesn't work? Paid \$50k and \$10k/yr and very close to implementing the program. New problem with state internet access but working on it.
- Cimmino: days to complete cases in 2014 impacted by CE officers being on medical leave? Yes, but fully staffed in 2015 and still took long time to resolve. Provide lunch time service? Supposed to be doing it but will check into it.
- Brown: not part of ERP for vehicle replacement? Q about CE officers – seemed like last year the answer was “we're OK.” Still the case? No, Planning/Building not part of it. Workload is continuing to increase. Problem is that Nicole Cromwell can't dedicate time to resolving cases that a full time supervisor could. Lead worker would be helpful.
- Sullivan: could be delays in processing applications if there aren't planners? Significant problems with processing permits? Over the counter permitting is the problem.
- Brewster: code enforcement funding is same as police – a question of how much money we are willing to ask people to pay in order to get certain level of service. More citations will produce more complaints from those who are cited.
- Brewster: will work rules allow supervisor to work in the field? Yes.
- Cromley: many complaints resolved in 30 days. How does that compare, is this a problem? No comparisons and code ordinance says that problems will be resolved in 10 days. Open storage, vehicles, trailers on street are biggest problems.
- Clark: like to talk to Candi about noon-hour closures.
- Yakawich: #1 concern in ward is for code violations. What level of CE is most needed? Supervisor, but one who can also investigate and resolve cases.
- Yakawich: what is needed for Council to move the proposal forward? Ms. Volek: Can look at submittal if supervisor is what is requested.
- Yakawich: is 5th Ave. planning process started? \$80k to be considered next week.
- Yakawich: source of \$80k? 100% federal planning funds.
- Cimmino: item will be discussed next week
- Hanel: your dept work is complicated but Billings is known as developer/builder friendly and easy to work with. Council should consider funding CE position.
- Sullivan: future organization – does CE belong in Planning? Yes.
- Hanel: encourage councilmembers to ride along with CE officer.
- **Public Comment:**
- Connie Wardell: PO Box 21432, Billings, MT - city needs to be careful about stepping up code enforcement. Code enforcement often takes a long time and it's for legit reasons.

Think that volunteers or lower paid employees could do the work. Relationships important. Yakawich: regardless of neighborhood, struggle with some owners to maintain property. What to do about this? Montana Landlords assoc. training about code enforcement, well received. Encourage the owners to join professional assoc and can learn better ways to manage property.

- Kevin Nelson: 4235 Bruce Avenue, Billings, MT - homeowner building at night, inspector red-tagged it and now it sits with half-built structure. How to fix and who is responsible? Bike Nazis demand more facilities and everyone has to pay for their improvements. Mayor Hanel: suggest Mr. Nelson call CE
- Dennis Ulvestad: 3040 Central Avenue, Billings, MT - spending down Building reserves issue; can the money be used elsewhere? No. State code restricts its use to building code review and enforcement.

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TOPIC #3	Fire
PRESENTER	Paul Dextras – Fire Chief
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- Chief Dextras: introduces Assistant Chief Bill Rash. Generate some revenue from BUFSA and dispatch services to county and AMR. Overview of dept and budget.
- Clark: when city annexes, does BUFSA line move too? When is contract renegotiated? No. A few years between negotiations. Fees increase each year. County appointed 3 member BUFSA board.
- Cimmino: compliment the presentation.
- McFadden: are fire engines keeping up with building sizes? No. But, codes that require sprinkler systems and fire alarm systems – fire prevention bureau.
- Friedel: spending on suppression includes equipment or only personnel? Does the cost include benefits and how much is that \$ amount? Most spending is on people. Will get the benefit numbers.
- Yakawich: 10,000 AMR calls, how many include fire dept.? Some cities have fire dept and ambulance services; considered creating fire and ambulance depts.? Most or all include the fire dept response. Collection rate for ambulances is low, many non-emergency transports and that’s where the money is made, city wouldn’t be able to make those kinds of transports; personnel costs are higher for fire dept than private sector. Private service here meets needs and requirements. Fire dept EMS services will change dramatically over next 20 years.
- Sullivan: does ACA help with some of the costs of emergency treatment and transport? If city had its own EMS, would truck have to go? Don’t know but it’s being discussed nationally. Don’t have to send a truck on every call.
- Clark: when did city last study ambulance service? Need to hire more people? Don’t know but before I came to billings. Cost would be more than for private service.
- **Public Comment:**
- Connie Wardell: PO Box 21432, Billings, MT - lived in city where fire transported patients, mill levy required, separate staff. Prevention bureau code experts could assist with code enforcement. Lived where she was helped by dept consultation.

TOPIC #4	Administration and Administrative Services
PRESENTER	Bruce McCandless – Assistant City Administrator
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- Bruce McCandless. Introduces Dave Watterson, IT and Larry Deschene, Fleet Services. Presentation on depts and budget.
- Cromley: where are central phone services located? They report to Dave Waterson.
- Sullivan: who pays for water in facility services? Facility services pays then charge depts. in their rent
- Yakawich: why pay DBA for services when facilities takes care of sidewalks? City owns other properties that DBA takes care of.
- Cimmino: bike parking? Park III has an area, there are discussions for more. Pressure washing? Has to be done with sweeper and or scrubber, can no longer be pressure washed.
- Clark: parking manager start to do presentations? Yes.
- **Public Comment:**
- none

TOPIC #5	Council Discussion
PRESENTER	
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- Swanson: potential initiative on police department recruiting to be presented at the next council meeting.
- Volek: discusses what department is doing and planning to do with recruitment.
- Friedel: what is the choke point? Could POST be conducted here? Ms. Volek: a lot of competition and a lot of retirements Mayor Hanel: Billings academy was cut because of funding
- Yakawich: BSED will present to Council soon. They are finding other types of professional recruiting to be difficult.

TOPIC #6	Public Comment
PRESENTER	
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- Gwen Kircher: 2310 Avenue C, Billings, MT - representing the Human Relations Commission: concern for Boys and Girls Club kids with upcoming Orchard Lane reconstruction. Controversy about turn lanes vs parking and Commission want the turn lanes for safety. 190 kids at Orchard lane building. McFadden: plans showed turn lanes at unnecessary locations and constituents didn't like that.