

# City Council Work Session

5:30 PM

Council Chambers

June 4, 2018 BUDGET ONLY

**ATTENDANCE:**

**Mayor/Council** (please check) x Cole, x Cromley, x Yakawich, x Brewster, x Ewalt, x Joy, x Friedel, x Gibbs, x Ronning, x Clark,  Brown.

**CM excused: Brown**

**ADJOURN TIME: 8:50 p.m.**

Agenda

TOPIC #1	Finance
PRESENTER	
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- Andy Zoeller, Finance Director: Finance department functions and goals. Debt funds. TIFs – district administrators are present and can answer questions.
- Cole: due dates for the debt funds? Overview of material handed out and points out page numbers.
- Ewalt: why are the 3 districts’ operating funds so much different? Maisie Sulser, Downtown Billings Alliance (DBA): Downtown Billings Partnership (DBP) = 3.4 FTEs being paid from TIF. Need the personnel for many activities and support other downtown organizations.
- Cole: could downtown contract with others and save money? Sulser: 3-4 downtown organizations are part of the DBA and there’s value in having those others involved and supported.
- Clark: is TIF paying for employees of other organizations? Is that the difference between downtown and other ones? Sulser: Several shared services and facilities. Hard to say which money is being used.
- Ronning: downtown a driving economic force for the community? Sulser: Yes.
- Ronning: Same for SBBURD? Sulser: No, not at this time.
- Ewalt: all districts spending lots of money for projects but downtown costs more. Doing the same jobs? Sulser: lots of projects in the works or ending.
- Joy: how long has the downtown district operated? In current form, since 1997.
- Cole: department goals... cash management or investment policy – want to see if we’re accomplishing everything that is possible? GFOA best practices and will be reviewing.
- Yakawich: does the City follow any revenue triggers? Examine status every quarter and annually. Being proactive.
- Gibbs: funding sustainability? Mainly for the GF but nothing concrete at this time.
- Cole: would like to see longer term projections.
- Clark: downtown district transfer of \$100,000? Park 2 expansion.

- Tim Goodridge, East Billings Urban Renewal District (EBURD) Coordinator: projects finally coming to fruition.
- Joy: number of FTEs in the salary area and projects? 1 FTE, a couple incentives and the big infrastructure coming up. Trying to encourage tree planting.
- Ewalt: anyone interested in Empire Steel? Lots of interest but nothing imminent.
- Cole: any obstacles adding the property to the district? Don't know.
- Yakawich: changes noticed from infrastructure improvements? Water used to sit long time but now the streets fill and slowly drains away.
- Steve Ziere: Difference between charges for service and operating agreement? Explains contract at \$141k and charges for service. Points out more significant projects.
- Clark: some work with SD2? Yes, a couple.
- Joy: how long has been district been in existence? 10 years.
- **Public Comment:**
- Kevin Nelson, 4235 Bruce Avenue, Billings, Montana: Optimist Park parking lot should have been done long ago and was bid last October. Snow and rain delays will cause a change order. This is a PRPL cost, not TIF.

TOPIC #2	Parks, Recreation & Public Lands
PRESENTER	
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- Mike Whitaker, Parks, Recreation & Public Lands Director: introduces staff, Rich DeVore and 2 other board members. Rose Pool will open on schedule, landscaping will be done soon. Projects underway. Staffing. Budgets.
- Joy: are dog park people still active in developing Centennial park? Members in the audience to testify.
- Ronning: how many accessible playgrounds? Several accessible but not a lot of play value. New equipment for Hawthorne will be inclusive and Optimist will have the same.
  - Cottonwood Park: immediate help for water problems? Yes, public works managing it.
  - How did City come to allow movies in parks? Remuneration? RFP for the films, chose Firefly, will donate to youth scholarship program.
- Cole: any development dollars available for High Sierra park restroom? None.
- Cole: trees part of the Centennial park plan and costs? \$2.46M and trees will be installed.
- Friedel: \$4500 for porta potty but we can use them for 4-6 months. Budget estimate only at this time, so actual use will probably be less.
- Friedel: Regional park on the west end, has the Water department land purchase been considered? Needs are for open space and play fields.
- Ewalt: porta potty's could be used 12 months at dog park and cost is too high. Vendor who we work with gave us that price (\$4500/yr).

- Brewster: why doesn't anyone want to talk about running an election to raise the Park District fee? Cost of election and campaign could be a barrier.
- Yakawich: if Council approved \$1M from reserve and \$450k from cash in lieu, could you work with that? Yes, but completing all infrastructure at one time will be most cost effective and less that has to be privately raised.
- Yakawich: agree that fee increase be put to a vote. The request could be larger and we should ask voters.
- Gibbs: cooperative agreement with TrailNet? Informal partnership, no formal agreement. Fundraising for SkyLine trail and maintenance has to be considered.
- Gibbs: volunteer average 4 hours, what is the plan to increase that? Have 1 volunteer coordinator who does great job and writes grants.
- Gibbs: could volunteers write the grants? Institutional knowledge is important to the grant agencies and that comes from employees.
- Gibbs: pursued corporate or NPO donations for park development? Don't have a dedicated sponsor developer but have done some of that work. Yellowstone Kelly development coop with Chamber of Commerce.
- Cole: \$1M increase for PD 1, would you support using some of it as match to private donations?
- Ewalt: PMDs pay for water? Yes.
- Clark: PD 1 created to solve maintenance backlog but now seems to go on forever? Still can't resolve all deferred maintenance with current assessment.
- Yakawich: funding strategy of \$1M? Cemetery ash tree replacement and mausoleum rehab.? Replacing some trees each year and need to improve the mausoleum maintenance.
- Gibbs: want additional park development and considered using Sheriff reserves?
- Clark: how much would dog park add to the park development costs? Don't remember and will check with the park plan.
- **Public Comment:**
- Rick DeVore, Parks, Recreation and Cemetery Board: 2017 park plan said 100 or so acres of open parkland needed now and will need even more over next 20 years. Park Board considered many options to fund park development, scaled back requests to the ones presented tonight. Still won't develop all of the parks that are needed.
- Ronning: thanks for volunteering. Did a committee work on the funding proposal? No, it was the Park Board. Meet 2<sup>nd</sup> Wed of the month at the PRPL office.
- Joy: Centennial Park first phase, could companies donate to it? Probably not because this is basic infrastructure. Donations OK for specific improvements.
- Yakawich: could we do something less and earmark \$ for specific purposes?
- Cole: sure that \$460k cash in lieu can be used for this park's development? Dept review only at this time. Over \$1M total available and \$460k could be used in this park.
- Kevin Nelson, 4235 Bruce Avenue, Billings, Montana: want no dogs allowed in parks. Shiloh Rd. weeds a mess. Has PRPL done water well analysis – can't reduce others' water rights. Victus study on aquatics facility – public concern about the parks, poor customer relations.

- Marci Smith: Landon's Legacy president and Kiwanis member. 20,000 special needs people need park development. Landon's Legacy paid \$66k for park plan and have \$250k for park development and will have in-kind donations if PRPL would accept them.
- Joy: asking for Council to reprioritize? Yes, there has to be more in the budget to do the accessible and inclusive park development.
- Ronning: how could City better help you? Money. Need more publicity and awareness. Think that Poly Vista should be a higher priority because there are people raising money to match.
- Gibbs: does the master plan address disabled persons' needs? Just starting to address those needs.
- Gibbs: priority for park board? Have talked about it.
- Ewalt: PRPL rejected in-kind work. Need to work on that.
- Steve Arveschoug, Big Sky Economic Development: parks important for economic development. Billings spends \$79.33/person/year on parks. Bismark, Fort Collins are way higher. Average for all the rest of the peer cities is \$134/person/year. Signature outdoor development: Skyline Trail; Coulson park development. Ask voters about spending more. State money now available for Coulson and river development. MDT looking at highway development and Corette plant property is being discussed. Need to work on the
- Cromley: info on park spending from other MT cities?
- Ewalt: info on how much park spending is from sales tax? No.
- Yakawich: parks spending is important but just one of many needs. How do we raise that money? If City will develop a long term park development plan, should ask voters for more money.
- Ronning: would something like this convince Legislature to allow local option tax? Yes.
- Friedel: has BSED done the same analysis of what city spends on the other improvements? No.
- Clark: considering just Coulson park and adjacent private land? Just considering the park, but timing is good to look at adjacent property too.
- Sue Bressler: Friends of Billings Dog Parks. Founded in 2008 and goal has been to develop 3 parks. High Sierra usage 380-400 people per day average. Encourage City to proceed with phase 1 and 2.
- Tim Warburton: Parks, Recreation and Cemetery Board: Staff does amazing work. Need a lot more support.
- Tom Rupsis, Parks, Recreation and Cemetery Board: Give credit to Marci and Landon's Legacy for work. Can put funding increase out to voters, may jeopardize the current funding. No capital funds for parks projects. If Council wants to get rid of PD 1, need to come up with money elsewhere. At \$1M/year, can achieve the vision in the master plan. Partnerships are part of this proposal.
- Brewster: PD 1 current funding is not jeopardized. Call us idiots and tired of it.
- Direction to staff: reprioritize spending and will place 3 porta potty's. Plan for longer term selection and installation of permanent bathrooms.

TOPIC #3	Council Discussion
PRESENTER	
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- Joy: discussion about staffing for the 3 districts.
- Cromley: Kiwanis still doing movies under the stars. First one will be on June 9 at the Zoo. Concessions proceeds go to Landon's Legacy.
- Ronning: update on Babcock theater.
- Yakawich: 21<sup>st</sup> annual March Against Drugs and Violence on Saturday at the Courthouse lawn.
- **Public Comment:**

TOPIC #4	Public Comment on Items Not on the Agenda
PRESENTER	
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- Tim Morton, 3444: Wish best of luck to new members. City shouldn't use the clock to time testimony. Think that comments to Tom were inappropriate and Councilmember should apologize. Officer Lamb in the parks has done a wonderful job and he's making a difference. Thank you for putting him in the position.