

**TRAFFIC CONTROL BOARD
MINUTES
December 6, 2011**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Brent Krueger, Walt Willett, Steve Zeier, Capt Bedford, Todd Cormier

MEMBERS ABSENT: Sondra Baker

STAFF SUPPORT: Terry Smith, Erin Claunch, Lora Mattox, John Gibson

GUESTS: None

BUSINESS MEETING

Call to order: Chair Steve Zeier called the meeting to order at 12:11 pm in the conference room of the Public Works Building, 2224 Montana Avenue.

Minutes: Motion for approval of the September minutes by Walt Willett, seconded by Todd Cormier. Motion approved on a voice vote. *(Note: The Board did not meet during the months of October and November)*

Open Public Comment: None

Council Activities Related to Transportation: None

STAFF REPORTS:

Major 2012 Construction Projects:

Terry reported that Central Avenue between 29th St West and 32 St West is under design. Curb, gutter and sidewalk will be installed along the north side of Central. Improvements fronting the vacant property on the south side of Central will be made when the property is developed.

Water and sewer replacement projects are scheduled for Montana Avenue from North 13th to North 31st; South 27th from 5th Ave. South to State Avenue; and in Grand Avenue at Rehberg Lane. Some local streets are also included.

The intersections of Grand Avenue at 17th Street West and 19th Street West will undergo changes in traffic signal operation. The Montana Department of Transportation has nominated a safety project to modify the traffic signals at these intersections, based on the accident history. The signals will be changed to provide "split phasing" where eastbound and westbound traffic will move separately. The change is being proposed to reduce left turn accidents. It will also reduce intersection efficiency because eastbound & westbound traffic will not flow at the same time. Due to the lack of available right-of-way, adding a left turn lane is not possible.

Erin reported that construction of Rimrock Road from Forsythia to Shiloh Road is scheduled for 2013. Design work on the project will begin in 2012. The Bench Connection project should be completed within the next couple weeks. Signals are being installed and the bridge over Alkali Creek is near completion. Reconstruction of Bench Boulevard from Lincoln Lane to Hilltop Road will begin during the summer of 2012. The project will include a roundabout at the intersection of Hilltop and Bench Boulevard.

Steve Zeier reported the South Billings Boulevard Urban Renewal District (SBURD) is discussing street improvements within the district. Potential projects include Newman Lane, Calhoun Lane, Orchard Lane, and Midland Road. Calhoun & Orchard would likely be done in conjunction with City pavement overlay projects. There is discussion of issuing bonds for Calhoun, Orchard, and Midland that would be paid back by future revenues generated by the district.

Board Reports:

Planning Board: Lora discussed re-authorization of the Federal Transportation Bill. One major change proposed would eliminate Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) with a population under 200,000. This would eliminate all the MPO's in Montana (Billings, Great Falls, and Missoula). The MPO's would be phased out over 4-years. This could mean a loss of approximately half of the Planning Division's budget. It would mean that local transportation planning in all of Montana's major cities would be shifted back to the State. Lora also reported she is continuing to familiarize herself with the new TransCad software acquired by Planning. The software will allow access to and maintenance of the Billings traffic forecasting model at the local level rather than having to run everything through MDT in Helena. The City will continue to work with MDT on the maintenance of the model, but having the software makes the model more useful locally.

OLD BUSINESS:

Steve Zeier's position. Terry reported that although he has discussed the question of whether Steve can continue to serve on the Board with the City Attorney, he has not received a formal response to the inquiry. Brent Brooks (City Attorney) sent an e-mail just this morning indicating he is waiting for input from the City Administrator's Office. Terry noted that Steve's first term expires the end of this month (12/31/11). It was noted that no applications have been received for either Steve's position (second term) or the vacancy created by James Knox resignation. Steve is waiting for the response from Legal before submitting an application.

Election of a new Vice-Chair. It was the consensus of those present to postpone any action on this item until the January meeting, since selection of a Chair and Vice-Chair is required with the start of the new calendar year anyway.

NEW BUSINESS: None.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 12:55 pm