

# City Council Work Session

5:30 PM  
Council Chambers  
Date: July 6, 2015

**ATTENDANCE:**

**Mayor/Council** (please check) x Hanel, x Cromley, x Yakawich, x Cimmino, x Pitman, x McFadden, x Bird, x Swanson, □ McCall, x Crouch, x Brown.

**McCall excused. Mayor Hanel – reads Purple Day proclamation**

**ADJOURN TIME: 9:02**

## Agenda

TOPIC #1	<b>Little League</b>
PRESENTER	Mike Whitaker, PRPL Director
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- Whitaker: 1500-2000 kids in summer baseball. Challenges aren't anyone's fault, they just occur.
- Brown: does city provide porta-toilets? No.
- Whitaker: city recreation also runs club baseball program.
- Bird: why is City sponsoring baseball? Request from residents/players.
- Cromley: do all little league teams play on City fields? Yes, but some also use SD 2 fields, especially in the Heights.
- Hanel: field inspection form reviewed by insurer? Scheels wants to help build concession stand at Poly Vista. Meet with league presidents earlier? Without LL teams, could City maintain the fields? No, but will run it by legal department and MMIA. Will work with any organization who wants to improve fields. Met with 5 of 6 league presidents and will meet again in fall when there is more time to resolve any issues. Important association.
- Bird: commend Mike and staff for working out challenges as they come up. Great value in continuing meetings. Rumors around about LL losing fields to other sports, can fields be multi-used and has PRPL staff had discussions about expanded uses. Whitaker: working since first of year with Amend Park to upgrade turf management plan, softball field maintenance will be partially funded by associations.
- Brown: has heard concerns over fall ball and restrooms at the start and end of season. Is it LL responsibility to provide toilets before water is available? Whitaker: they usually provide toilets early season but not usually needed in the fall.
- Cimmino: new fields being planned at Centennial? Whitaker: master plan will go to Council on August 3.
- City Administrator Tina Volek: talk about new equipment at Pioneer and South Park? Whitaker: started work today to install equipment, 10-14 days to completion, will have opening ceremony.
- Yakawich: when will South Park playground be installed? Whitaker: at same time as Pioneer, alternating work between the 2.

- **Public comments:** none

TOPIC #2	<b>MET Transit Operation Analysis</b>
PRESENTER	Ron Wenger, Transit Manager
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- Wenger: background and history on public transit, nationally and in Billings. 4-5 year intervals do the operational analysis. Introduce Dr. A.T. Stoddard.
- Stoddard: highlights from several volumes of data provided to MET staff. A little over \$6/passenger cost. Fare revenue is less than \$1.00/passenger. Other data and analysis, including survey results.
- Hanel: how does Billings compare with other cities, including Missoula? Stoddard: similar size cities, MET does well. Mill levy funding is unusual but positive for the service. Costs and efficiency are about avg. Fare revenue a little lower than average but given riders' demographics, rate decisions are understandable.
- Cromley: questions about consultant: LSC Transportation, long term contract.
- Cimmino: recommendations for fee increases? Stoddard: none at this time. Could increase fares significantly but would lose passengers and it is a small amount of total revenue.
- Yakawich: quality of service survey parameters? Rating of 3-4 seems high. Impression is that MET is in trouble. What are your recommendations to address issues? Stoddard: scale is 1-5. MET operates a good service, clean buses and work areas, ridership needs the service so they appreciate it and rate it that way. Agree that there are concerns but not in trouble yet. Restructure some of the routes, low hanging fruit.
- Brown: MET isn't a profit center? Real question is whether or not to offer the service? Stoddard: not operating at a profit. Don't have to decide whether to offer it yet, but that discussion could be needed in future.
- Wenger: Chose to not make changes this year because report is too late for August changes (in time for parents to make changes for children going to school), new Heights middle school, can work on the low hanging fruit, good infrastructure but operations funding is a challenge. Hope we can wait to see what happens with Federal funding. Will be in a position to offer Council sound recommendations.
- Hanel: estimate number of complaints of trips, falls, etc.? Wenger: incidents do occur, hundreds of thousands of rides per year, lots of risk, cameras have helped with claims/false claims.
- Cimmino: MET maintains their facilities very well. Commends staff for keeping facilities in excellent condition. Tours are available of the facilities.
- **Public comments:**
- Tom Zebruchen, 1747 Wicks Lane, Billings, MT: didn't see the cost of buses in the presentation. Category for replacing. Federal funding is based on gas tax collections, lobbying Congress to stop using that money for public transit and trails. Urge City to look for funding sources outside of Federal sources.

TOPIC #3	<b>Facilities Master Plan</b>
PRESENTER	Bob LaPerle, CTA Architects
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- Tina Volek: introduction about facility use and planning.
- LaPerle: Set up conference call with consultant: Chloe Jaco, Senior Vice President for CGL Consultants. Plan is a road map for 15 years. Flexible, serve as a tool for future, needs to be renewed on regular basis. 4 basic steps in the planning work: needs assessment, evaluation of facilities and comparison to national standards, options analysis, and report of recommendations. Several proposed options: all new facilities, renovating some older facilities and building additional facilities, leasing additional space.
- Brown: should city look at longer time horizon than 10-15 years? LaPerle: yes, but projections may not be as accurate if looking at longer time period. Plan needs to be reviewed before building or renovating.
- Swanson: renovating this building causes relocation of those depts. LaPerle: temporary relocation cost is included in total estimates.
- Bird: renovation is for new and old parts of City Hall? LaPerle: yes.
- Cimmino: does not include land or parking? 120 employees increase over next 15 years, so facilities are minor cost compared to employee costs. LaPerle: right, those would have to be part of final decisions to build. Right, building is only part of the cost.
- Hanel: Battin building sufficient size? Volek and LaPerle: building is large enough but has obvious issues.
- McFadden: really going to cost as much as estimated to remediate? Basement usage? LaPerle: can't answer. Mostly storage and one small break room.
- Yakawich: could the present buildings be built up? LaPerle: possible to do that, but there are ramifications such as relocating, probably not as cost effective as new building on new site.
- McFadden: architecturally impossible to build up without larger columns? LaPerle: have to consider cost effectiveness and that probably isn't the best.
- Brown: costs are close for all options and need to do the planning now. LaPerle: yes, situation is already bad and will get worse until plan is implemented.
- Hanel: new or other building is needed for efficiency and cost effective.
- LaPerle: move on to BOC improvements and remote sites.
- Brown: priority order of recommendations? LaPerle: yes, look at them in this order but opportunities will come up and reorder them.
- Volek: let Council know that the north part of PD 2 lot has an interested purchaser, land south of BOC isn't available and 2 lots east of vacant lot aren't available.
- Pitman: big issue is political, does the City have an obligation to remain downtown? Outlying land is less expensive. Suggest this should be a Community Conversation topic. LaPerle: discussion occurred and downtown presence was important.
- Cimmino: advantageous to remain downtown, and would like to see a "one stop shop" type of building.
- Bird: thanks. Thinks this is a good idea for a Community Conversation topic. Plan validates what many people have been thinking.
- **Public comments:**

- Dennis Ulvestad, 3040 Central Avenue, Billings, MT: agree that City should consider Battin building which is a structurally sound building, plenty of space, accessible.
- Kevin Nelson, 4235 Bruce Avenue, Billings, MT: type/age of growth is what is important because that will drive what facilities are needed. Need to take steps to reduce average age.
- Hanel: people move here for reasons such as hospitals, housing, and even if they're elderly they add resources to the community.
- Bird: need to attract Millennials, which is now the biggest population cohort. Need to make city appealing to young.
- Hanel: may want to ask citizens to help with these decisions.

TOPIC #4	<b>Lockwood Non-Motorized Plan</b>
PRESENTER	Candi Millar, Planning and Community Services Director
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- Millar: Council needs to review plans outside of City but within MPO to make recommendations to the PCC. Introduce Jolene Reich and Chuck Strum.
- Jolene Reich: plan overview, overview and history of Lockwood Pedestrian District. Goal is to eliminate pedestrian fatalities and injuries. Benefits and needs for improving pedestrian district.
- Yakawich: aware of pedestrian death, unfortunate but it spurred the planning effort. Sounds like sidewalks will be public. Sounds like County doesn't have urban standards, yet City inherits them. Implore County to adopt development standards. Reich: yes. County doesn't want to require anything, so will work with new businesses to make the improvements adjacent to their properties, will work with developers to do same, and will publicize businesses who make the improvements.
- Cimmino: does Yellowstone County ever provide match for projects? Reich: haven't asked BOCC for GF money yet but can do it in future.
- **Public comments:** none

TOPIC #5	<b>Council Discussion</b>
PRESENTER	
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- Crouch: received Tongue River Railroad handout asking for public comments until August 24. Ranches will be negatively impacted by railroad. Will ask Council to authorize letter about ranchers' economic loss.
- Bird: City email account – receiving large amounts of spam messages. Volek: City uses State spam elimination system. Can keep track of sources and hopefully eliminate them. Not recommended to “unsubscribe” as this leads to more spam.
- McFadden: alleys around 500 block of Lewis need to be graded. Difficult to drive through the alley. Grading and gravel would be beneficial.

- Pitman: wards will warrant a primary. Cost and did we budget it? Volek: will check and get back to Council.
- Swanson: commend school board trustees for naming the new middle school after Ben Steele. Thanked grass roots organizations' efforts.
- Bird: Little League All Star games have begun. Additionally: 2 upcoming community conversations on hunger – please attend. Information about the events were sent to Mayor and Council emails and the information is posted online.
- Hanel: complaints about Good Such from nearby business.
- Brown: ward 5 business complaint about noise from a bar
- Bird: 8<sup>th</sup> and Central gas station weeds are out of control. Several businesses along Central have the same issue. Volek: reminder that code enforcement/violations are dealt with on a complaint basis.
- Brown: what is complaint process? Volek: on website. Millar: main City homepage – “report a concern.” Code Enforcement also has complaint form on its page – “report a violation.” Can be more specific on the Code Enforcement website complaint page.

TOPIC #6	<b>Public Comment on Items not on the Agenda</b>
PRESENTER	
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- Tom Zebruchen, 1747 Wicks Lane, Billings, MT: last work session, postponed public safety levy. Need to look for alternatives, such as removing the levy cap. Council initiative for an ordinance amending charter to remove cap, and do it annually as budget needs dictate.
- McFadden: do you think voters would allow Council to set the levy?
- Kevin Nelson, 4235 Bruce Avenue, Billings, MT: street assessments. They aren't being assessed according to Mumford's report. Not equitable.
- Steven Muse, 2048 Willet Drive, Billings, MT: want builders to provide toilets at work sites. Email responses not OK. Enforcement is the problem or does a law need to be written? Council can adopt a law.
- Brown: City employee sent the email about porta-toilet on a trailer? Muse: believes so.
- Millar: email from Brian Anderson – Sheridan requires sanitary facilities. Subcontractors are using portable ones. Have installed signs that sanitary facilities are required. Will enforce it on complaint. Will red-tag until they provide the facilities. Could also use public facilities.
- Hanel: seeing more contractors providing portable restroom facilities.
- Millar: in 1990s, there was some resistance to enforcing this code; trying to change mindset of contractors.
- Hanel: remember that there is a code enforcement process...must file a complaint and code enforcement will investigate