

SUMMARY OF ADMINISTRATIVE MEETING

March 20, 2019– 4:00 p.m.
Room 330, City-County Building
316 N. Park Avenue

1. **Call to order, introductions, opening comments** – Mayor Collins called the meeting to order. Commissioners Haladay, Noonan, O’Loughlin and Wicks were present.

Staff present was: City Manager Ana Cortez; Deputy City Attorney Iryna O’Connor; Police Chief McGee; Assistant Police Chief Steve Hagen; Assistant Fire Chief Ken Wood; Community Development Director Sharon Haugen; Public Works Director Randall Camp; Assistant Public Works Director Libbi Lovshin; City Engineer Ryan Leland; Interim Parks and Recreation Director Craig Marr; Finance Director Glenn Jorgenson; Budget Manager Nikki Davidson; Parking Director Dave Hewitt; Community Facilities Superintendent Troy Sampson; Human Resource Director James Fehr and City Clerk Debbie Havens.

Others in attendance was IR Reporter Thomas Plank ; HCC members John Andrews and Sumner Sharpe

2. **March 6, 2019 Summary** – The March 6, 2019 administrative meeting summary was approved as submitted.

3. **Commission comments, questions**

Upcoming Appointments – Mayor Collins recommended the following board appointment:

Non-Motorized Travel Advisory Council (NMTAC) Appointment of Dennis McCahon to a first full term on NMTAC. Term will begin upon appointment and expire March 31, 2022.

4. **City Manager’s Report** – Manager Cortez had no items to report on.

5. **Department Discussions**

Finance Department – Manager Cortez gave a PowerPoint presentation on the General Fund Revenues and Expenses that included the following items:

Revenues

Fund Balance

Reserves

Enterprise

Detail of new positions

New positions: General Fund

Adjustment Detail – Savings

Highlights from Cuts

New Positions and Reclassifications – General Fund and Enterprise Funds

Commissioner Wicks asked if the HCC Coordinator will be staffed out of the City Manager’s office. Manager Cortez explained her recommendation to combine the duties of the Sustainability Coordinator and the HCC Coordinator.

Commissioner Noonan referenced the recommended cut from the Public Art general fund and spoke on the history of the Public Arts Committee’s fund balance. Manager Cortez stated she would explain the recommendation for the Public Art Committee later in the presentation.

Commissioner O'Loughlin asked what the recommended cuts would be in the Parks & Recreation Department. Manager Cortez stated the recommendation is to reduce seasonal positions by \$40,000.

Commissioner O'Loughlin referred to the list of recommended cuts and asked if they were one time cuts or ongoing cuts. Manager Cortez stated the list of recommended cuts include both one-time and ongoing cuts.

Commissioner Wicks asked for further clarification on the recommended cuts for the Transit System. Manager Cortez stated the Transit budget is a work in process; staff has looked at the entire system and has listened to the comments from the community. At this point, staff is outlining the community conversation and considering offering services other than the transit. The \$100,000 is a goal of reducing the costs in the transit system. Commissioner Wicks asked if there is potential to backfill the cuts with sponsorships. Manager Cortez concurred corporate sponsors would assist with the transit budget.

Commissioner Noonan asked Manager Cortez to explain the recommended \$70,000 cut from the manager/commission. Manager Cortez explained currently there is a contingency fund of \$175,000, which will be renamed to "special projects" and she is recommending cutting \$70,000 for FY20.

Commissioner Noonan asked for further clarification on the \$200,000 for Downtown Initiative and asked if is tentative until the specifics of a proposal can be looked at. Manager Cortez stated the \$200,000 is a placeholder and noted she has been in conversation with the BID and Downtown Helena in hopes of having a detailed partnership to present to the commission that would outline what the city is going to do and what the BID would do. However, those details are still being discussed.

Commissioner Noonan commented he has been working with the BID and as long as there is the opportunity to lay out what services the BID will be responsible for, what funds may be available and that we have a transparent sense on how the recommendations aligns with the BID. He noted the BID is going into the renewal process and it needs to be clear on what the BID does for the downtown. Manager Cortez stated the approach was to create synergy; downtowns thrive because of downtown associations and not because of government. The city wants to fund additional duties through the BID; however, it may be another organization.

Commissioner O'Loughlin stated this proposal gives the BID the opportunity to show the community what they do. She understands the capacity and expertise; she does not understand the consternation. Commissioner Noonan noted the consternation is the recommendation is to fund it for only two years.

Manager Cortez asked the commission for direction on the recommended cuts they support or would like to remove from consideration.

Mayor Collins noted the transit budget is fluid at this time and the recommended cut may not happen.

Commissioner Wicks asked how long the position in the Fire Department has been vacant. Finance Director Jorgenson stated the position has never been filled since it was funded.

Commissioner O'Loughlin stated the recommend list makes sense; the only clarification would be on the transit budget and asked for an update at future administrative meetings on the transit system and the budget. Commissioner O'Loughlin thanked staff for the work in recommending the budget cuts and she appreciates the thought process Manager Cortez has brought to the table.

Commissioner Wicks concurred with Commissioner O'Loughlin's comments; however, she suggested cutting the transit budget by \$50,000 and not the \$100,000.

Commissioner O'Loughlin referenced Fund 440 and asked what the impact would be of not depositing the \$400,000. Manager Cortez stated Fund 440 is a savings account for unforeseen expenses. If asked, she would recommend not cutting it by the entire \$400,000. Commissioner O'Loughlin asked how was the \$400,000 was determined. Director Jorgenson noted staff has recommended the amount be higher; however, it averages to the \$400,000 and it is transferred from the general fund.

Commissioner Noonan stated the Downtown Initiative is included in the commission priorities; however, at the same time it is a transfer of money from other initiatives. Manager Cortez noted the initiative is already funded through the different departments; the recommendation is to create the downtown initiative.

Manager Cortez asked if the commission is comfortable with combining the positions of the HCC and Sustainability Coordinators. There was commission concurrence. Commissioner Wicks commented if it does not work, she would like to re-visit.

Commissioner Haladay asked if the reclassifications take into consideration an increase in hourly wages. Manager Cortez stated the recommendation is based on the current pay scale.

Manager Cortez acknowledged the work of the Finance Department in presenting the proposed cuts.

6. Committee discussions

Helena Citizens Council – No report

7. Review of agenda for March 25, 2019 Commission meeting – No discussion held.

9. Public comment – HCC Chair Sumner Sharpe stated the elimination of the HCC Coordinator is the first he has heard of. He feels there may be a conflict of interest if the position is under the City Manager. The HCC reports to the commission and not the manager.

HCC Chair Sharpe stated interviews for this position are scheduled for tomorrow. Manager Cortez noted we advertised for position prior to knowing all the details.

Commissioner O'Loughlin stated the commission and the HCC need to have a further conversation; the HCC does report to the commission and has a placeholder on both the administrative and regular city commission meeting agendas. The commission has the ability to attend the HCC meetings and formalize the communications. Commissioner O'Loughlin stated having more coordination with the manager's office would be beneficial. This is an opportunity to find someone who is a direct conduit to the manager and commission.

HCC Chair Sharpe again spoke on how the HCC communicates with the city departments and city manager. This recommendation is a real change with the communication between the HCC and the commission. Further discussion was held on how to best utilize the HCC Coordinator position.

Commissioner O'Loughlin suggested having further discussion on the HCC Coordinator position and look at re-working the duties of the city commission office.

Commissioner Wicks concurred to have further discussion on this issue and look at the positions to in the commission office. There may be an opportunity to combine this position into the commission office.

HCC Chair Sharpe also addressed the recommendation to have the HCC pay a portion for being on the ballot. Manager Cortez noted all election costs would be paid from the commission office election line item.

After the conclusion of the discussion it was the direction to move forward with the interviews for the HCC Coordinator.

9. Commission discussion and direction to City Manager – No discussion held.

10. Adjourn – The meeting adjourned at 5:25 p.m.