

SUMMARY OF ADMINISTRATIVE MEETING

**October 30, 2019– 4:00 p.m.
Room 326, City-County Building
316 N. Park Avenue**

- 1. Call to order, introductions, opening comments** – Mayor Collins called the meeting to order. Commissioners Haladay, Noonan Wicks and O’Loughlin were present.
Staff present: City Manager Ana Cortez; Assistant to the City Manager Amanda Opitz; City Attorney Thomas Jodoin; Deputy City Attorney Iryna O’Conner; Interim Police Chief Steve Hagen; Assistant Fire Chief Mike Chambers; Interim Public Works Director Ryan Leland; Transportation Systems Director David Knoepke; Parks, Recreation and Open Lands Director Kristi Ponzozzo; Human Resources Director Yolanda Franco; Community Development Director Sharon Haugen; Community Facilities Superintendent Troy Sampson; Public Information Officer Rebecca Connors and Interim City Clerk Dannai Clayborn.
Others in attendance included an HCC Chair Sumner Sharpe, and HPAC Chair John Moore.
- 2. October 16, 2019 Summary** – The October 16, 2019 administrative summary was approved as submitted.
- 3. Commission comments, questions** – Commissioner Noonan congratulated the BID for obtaining the 60% of petition signatures for their creation. Commissioner Wicks welcomed all new staff in attendance.
- 4. City Manager’s Report**
City Manager Cortez introduced the new Budget Analysts in the Finance Department, Chris Couey and Mari Haefka. Manager Cortez indicated at an upcoming Administrative Meeting discussion for the Recycling Program options for the City would be brought forward. The City had been contacted by the Airport Board stating the Airport would be a risk of losing Federal Grant funds if they were to pay assessments levied by the City, however the City’s waiver request form was yet to be submitted by the Airport. Haladay stated he was aware this issue had come up in the past and asked if a copy of the Auditors report was given to the City, the Manager confirmed a copy had been received. This issue would be monitored by staff. Manager Cortez stated the new E-billing program would have a soft roll out in December. Commissioner Wicks asked if there would be cost savings associated with the use of a E-billing system. Manager Cortez stated there may be a possibility of some minor cost savings, but could not state with certainty. The City would be participating in a Trick or Treat celebration throughout the offices for Halloween, and staff would be handing out candy to children. Assistant to the City Manager Opitz gave a brief update on the roll out of the redesigned City website, stating the website should be live the week of Thanksgiving.
- 5. Litigation Strategy** – No report given.
- 6. Department Requests** – No items on the agenda.

7. **Department Presentations**

Public Works

Enlargement of wastewater service are for the Red Alder Residences at 2200 Henderson Street – Interim Public Works Director Eric Urban

Interim Public Works Director Urban reported the City of Helena has water and sewer service areas that are not the same as the City Limits. The service areas are remnants from when Helena was platting lots to become the capital of Montana. Lots were platted that the City of Helena could not serve with water and sewer, so the service areas were adopted to show lots that could and could not be served by either water or sewer. The service areas allowed the City to have control of the water and sewer systems and trigger points for main extensions and potentially water tanks or lift station. The enlargement of a water or sewer service area acts similarly to annexation where the City Commission can approve with condition for approval, such as mains extensions or other needed improvements in order to serve the lots.

The property at 2200 Henderson Street is currently under development. The property is currently in the water service area but not in the wastewater service area. Sewer main and water main extends across the frontage of the lot on Brady Street. The development has approved infrastructure plans and building plans.

The owner of the property, Lee S. Flasnick, is requesting an enlargement of the wastewater service area to service the Red Alder Residences Development. Water main and sewer main is proposed to be extended through the property to service the 27 buildings planned for development.

Parks, Recreation and Open Lands

Update: Beattie Street Trailhead and Street Improvement—Parks, Recreation and Open Lands Director Kristi Ponozzo

Parks, Recreation and Open Lands Director Kristi Ponozzo reported the City completed the 2nd of three public meetings for the Beattie St. Trailhead and Street Improvement Project on Monday, Sept. 30. The meeting was well attended with a field portion of the meeting where the trailhead design was staked out on the ground for people to observe the general layout. City Staff presented the revised traffic calming and refined design for the streets and trailhead.

The final public meeting with the 90% design will be on November 6.

Director Ponozzo indicated staff was taking into consideration the negative feedback received in public commentary at the 60% design meeting regarding the Bulbouts for the traffic calming strategy, and as such be proposing increased signage as an alternative. Commissioner Wicks asked if the increased signage would include electronic signs or would this option be cost prohibitive. Transportation Systems Director David Knoepke stated the staff was recommending beginning with the standard increased signage and monitoring the response from the residents, and if necessary, adding electronic signs, in a progressive model. Commissioner O'Loughlin asked when the next update would be on an agenda. Director Ponozzo stated the next update would be at the 11-13-19 Administrative Meeting.

Transportation Systems

Update: Capital Transit Ridership Redesign Outreach Session Results and Request for Proposal (RFP) for Redesign Consideration—Transportation Systems Director David Knoepke, Transportation Superintendent

Transportation Systems Director David Knoepke reported the City recognizes that our current Transit System is resource intensive and is limited in its scope of operation. In addition, the current form of "Traditional Public Transit" suffers low ridership on our fixed route bus's and has a very high demand for ADA Para-transit service.

Capital Transits Current operation consists of 2 Fixed Route buses within the City and 4 complimentary ADA Para-transit buses. The fixed route buses have limited stops. The Para-transit buses are required if a transit provider operates a fixed route system. Additionally, ridership must apply and be approved for ADA Paratransit service. Capital Transit also operates 1 deviated-fixed route bus serving the East Helena-East Valley region. This item is introduced to update the City Commission on the results of the transit outreach sessions and discuss the demand response potential for public transportation in the City.

Update the City Commission on outreach results; and seek permission from the City Commission to pursue an RFP to provide an area-wide transit system that is universal in accessibility for customers of any age or ability in a manner that is cost effective and relevant that must be compliant with 5311 Federal Transit Authority (FTA) operations and capital equipment grant funding requirements.

Transportation Superintendent Elroy Golemon stated staff had conducted 6 outreach events from July to September, and of the public commentary received the highest volume of comments indicated a desire to return to a HATS, on-demand style program and move away from the Capital Transit, fixed stop model. Other comments included: increase the hours and days of operation, adding more stops, concerns over the trip cost as compared to ride time, and increased partnerships for ADA / Para-transit services. Superintendent Golemon discussed mixed models in other cities which City staff had researched where an on-demand service was utilized and indicated City Staff would recommend further researching the on-demand system through an RFP as a solution to the complications which currently exist with the City's transit system. City Manager Cortez stated the RFP would allow the City to collect data to track the rides requested and given, and would allow the City to be more flexible and responsive to the needs and demands of riders. Commissioner O'Loughlin stated she was open to learning more about the on-demand model but would like to see further data from Cities which had moved to or piloted this type of model and moved back to a more traditional transit system and why this might have happened. The Commissioner further stated she would like to see more outreach and promotion of ridership explored by the City for the current system to see what impact it may have. Commissioner O'Loughlin stated she would like to see a draft RFP at a future Administrative meeting and invite outside stakeholders to participate in the discussion. Commissioner Haladay asked if what City staff was recommending was eliminating fixed routes entirely for a demand/response system. Manager Cortez stated this could be approached as a pilot program, prior to eliminating any current system. Commissioner Noonan asked how East Helena would be serviced by this new model. Superintendent Golemon stated the new system would only serve the areas

which are provided service by the current transit model. Director Knoepke stated there could be Park & Ride option added as data was collected to help with broadening the areas served. Manager Cortez stated the demand/response system would be able to evolve to more quickly than the Transit system due to its nature. Commissioner Haladay asked what steps were being taken to ensure the new system would meet all ADA requirements. Director Knoepke stated all vehicles purchased at this point meet ADA requirements. Superintendent Golemon stated the program would fulfill the 5311 Compliance and the units would be able to be used as Para-transit vehicles. Superintendent Golemon also discussed options for alternative uses for the existing large buses being used as part of the Capital Transit system. Commissioner Haladay asked when the draft RFP was presented to the Commission the costs and impacts of projected increased demand on these operating costs be provided for study. Commissioner Haladay asked if there had been many discussions with the ADA stakeholders on the proposed system. Superintendent Golemon stated there had been outreach but limited feedback was given, except to say there would most likely be increased interest given the new model. The Commission reached a consensus to move forward with a study session to further explore the demand / response model versus the current fixed route system. This study session would be sometime in January.

8. Committee discussions

Helena Public Arts Committee

The HPAC wishes to move forward with prioritizing the following projects for FY2020:

- 1. Traffic Signal Box Mural Project Continuation.** A project proposed to go through a request for proposal to put vinyl wraps of original art on 10 traffic signal boxes. Similar to the previous vinyl wrap project. This project will require an encroachment permit from the Montana Department of Transportation. HPAC has easily acquired the permit in the past when covering the other boxes. A call for art in the form of an RFP will go out to artists seeking designs (Phase I). A contractor will be selected through a separate procurement process to complete Phase 2 and Phase 3.
- 2. Kyle Boundy Memorial Sculpture.** The project will consist of creating and installing an Interactive Art Project for children in Wesleyan Park within the City of Helena. The purpose of the project is to commemorate Kyle's more whimsical and playful nature. To create a work of art that surprises and brings about new perspectives. The sculpture will meet ADA, safety requirements, and be interactive. Through an approved RFP, the HPAC will vet the applications and, along with Kyle Boundy's parents, choose a sculpture to be placed within the park upon approval of the Open Lands, Parks & Recreation Department.
- 3. Ghost Sign Restoration.** A project to refresh painting old exterior signs (Ghost Signs) on Downtown Buildings within the City of Helena. This will provide both historic and artistic value to the city while adhering to resolution no. 11316. The Helena Public Arts Committee is requesting the Commission review the proposed projects and approve the City Manager to support the procurement of these projects.

HPAC Chairman John Moore stated the Equity Fountain unveiling would need to be moved from the original proposed date of November 16th to December 7th, and the Parks and Police departments were working with the HPAC to organize the change. Commissioner Noonan thanked Mr. Moore for all the work he has done as Chairperson of the committee. Consensus was reached to move forward all the proposed projects.

9. **Review of agenda for November 13, 2019 Commission meeting – No Discussion**
City Manager Cortez stated she understood the Commission would like Study Sessions scheduled for the Public Transit draft RFP and the Recycling discussion both in January.
10. **Public comment** – Lee Shubert of the BID stated the actual number of signatures procured for the petition was 66%. Mr. Schubert also wished to address some confusion over how the Parking Plan was developed, stating the plan was developed through many public meetings and with much input from all stakeholders and was a cooperative effort.
11. **Commission discussion and direction to City Manager –**
 - a. City Manager Goal Setting Session
A discussion of the Goals Spreadsheet listing short, mid, and long term goals was discussed by the City Manager and the Commission, ensuring all information was accurate and understood by all parties.
12. **Adjourn** – The meeting adjourned at 6:52p.m.