



HCC Full Board Meeting

Minutes

Weds. April 24th, 7-9PM

In person room 326 or via Zoom

12:48 Meeting Called to order by Chair Ben Kuiper

In Attendance –Lori FitzGerald, John Andrew, Diana Hammer, Patricia Bik, Nancy Perry, Joe Lehman, Ben Kuiper, Lowell Chandler, Paige Myers, Sean Morrison, Emily Mowers, Bob Schlack, Janet Zimmerman, Ryan Schwochert, Rick Boleware, Anna Kratz, Dylan Klapmeier, Denise R. Barber, Susan Steffens, Peggy Benkelman (coordinator)

HCC Members Excused: Sonda Gaub, Chase Eaton, Sydney Ausen, Brenda Valerio, Bob Habeck

Members of the public: Seth Brandenberger (BID), Dr Thomas Gregory, Chloe & Martha.

Quorum established - yes

13:29 Approval of March 2023 Full HCC Board Minutes – all members were in favor, no changes or additions. Minutes approved. Motion to approve made by Pat Bik and seconded by Lori FitzGerald.

Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items:

13:39 HCC Member District #3 – Sean Morrison: Sean states he is writing a letter of support for the Local Government Review. He is doing so as a member of the public, not as a member of HCC. He will share a draft with everyone via their personal emails.

City Commission Update – none

16:05 Seth Brandenberger of the Helena Business Improvement District (BID) speaks:

The Business Improvement District (BID) is voted on to be continued every 10 years. The BID does the flower baskets, banners, garbage collection, waste baskets etc. with their maintenance ambassadors. The BID pretty does anything that helps the downtown be a better place. Recently the BID merged with Downtown Helena INC. As part of this merger, we will be doing a lot more social media outreach. Please look on Facebook and Instagram. The BID funds event grants such as the Art Walks and the Soap Box Derby. Alive at Five is resuming this summer and the L&C Brewery is taking that over. I am here to talk about the need for a permanent downtown restroom. People have called and asked us to remove human waste. Other members of the public have pointed out there is no public restroom between the Civic Center and the Library, and nothing is open 24 hours. The BID has had a blue Porta Potty in Constitution Park for over a year. The BID pays the monthly maintenance fee. For a permanent restroom the BID has chosen the *Portland Loo* design. You have privacy yet you can see if someone is in there. It has a stainless-steel flush toilet with antifreeze rim, so it can maintain in pretty low temperatures. The Loo has blue light inside, this is a good deterrent for drug use, hard to find a vein in blue light. You can also fit a bicycle and stroller in there. Missoula and Billings have the *Portland Loo* and they like them. Funding for this toilet will come from: \$98,000 City of Helena General Fund, \$35,000 from L&C County, \$44,000 from BID plus a possible TIF grant – **Tax Increment Financing (TIF)** is a technique that allows a local government or redevelopment authority to generate revenues for a group of blighted properties targeted for improvement, known as a TIF district. The total cost of the Loo would be \$240,000. Currently the BID is working with City Parks to get on board with this project. The Parks Department suggested another placement of the public restroom on the west side of the Power Block Building.

Sean Morrison – HCC District #3 Rep. asks: Why is the Parks Department reticent about using Constitution Park for a location? Seth answers he thinks they prefer a two stall option with a place to wash hands on the Walking Mall area.

Pat Bik – HCC District #1 asks about the cost of a two stall toilet. Seth says the company CXT price is high. Missoula has one at a cost of \$500,000.

Paige Myers District #3 asks if it is cheaper to purchase several units to save money? Seth answers no. Paige also wonders about privacy. For instance if someone were to use a selfie stick and take pictures of someone using the restroom?

40:59 Vote on Recommendation for Public Restroom Downtown. Diana Hammer the author of the recommendation suggests using Constitution Park as a location is a good idea.

43:04 Pat Bik says the location the Parks Department wants would necessitate the removal of an art installation. She too supports Constitution Park as a good location.

44:37 A motion is made to strike the discussion section written on the recommendation. Motion made by Denise R. Barber and seconded by Pat Bik. All were in favor, non opposed.

45:19 Diana Hammer wants to add the wording a safe and visible location.

47:54 Susan Steffens moves to approve the amendment language. Motion is seconded by Lori FitzGerald.

49:28 Vote to approve the amendment. All in favor 18, 1 opposed.

50:18 Vote to approve the recommendation as amended. All in favor 18, 1 opposed.

50:51 Recommendation for Waste Management

Denise R. Barber authored this recommendation. She explains the recommendation. First there has been discussion about a new building to house the garbage trucks at the Transfer Station. This is important, but not sure of the cost. Second, in regards to recycling, I am in support of universal recycling which means everyone gets a bin and pays for it at a cost of \$11-\$14 month. A person is not required to recycle. Third is yard waste collection. If it too is universal, it would cost \$10-\$15 per month. The City recommends a subscription based service for this. The HCC should support this. In addition, there is a voluntary pay as you throw option. And, you could trade in your 96 gallon container for a 64 gallon container and save \$4 per month.

Sean Morrison states the cost doesn't reflect the savings from landfill diversion. There are also traffic/safety concerns for garbage trucks travelling from the Transfer Station (Custer Ave) all the way to the Landfill (Deal Lane)

Dylan Klapmeier questions the universal recycling program. He thinks it is better to educate the public on how to recycle. Everyone getting a bin may be counterproductive. Dylan would rather see more recycle drop off sites.

Paige Myers asks Denise R. Barber to define single stream recycling. Denise says everyone would get a bin and be able to throw paper, cardboard, plastics etc into it (no glass though).

Janet Zimmerman – says it seems Helena wants to penalize the public for recycling. She has lived in Bozeman where it seems they do a better job of it. Here we are looking at ways to streamline the waste stream and “someone” at the top keeps trying to use an out-of-date process.

Under the Efficiencies Section of the Waste Document Denise explains these sections were not completed before the development of the Master Plan, so we are kind of in the dark.

The city/county does want the garbage, for the tipping fees. Plenty of people are coming into this community. They are easily going to have enough money in tipping fees to operate. Denise has repeatedly asked for a response in regards to the savings on the landfill, but has received no response.

Diana Hammer – she thinks the city may need to rethink Collection Services. Costs vs. taking garbage, recyclables and yard waste may be a slightly higher fee, but they would be collecting everything all at once.

1:11:45 Dylan Klapmeier makes a motion to amendment the document and add the language “the HCC supports expanding options for recycling”

1:12:44 Paige Myers supports expanded options for recycling, and adds such as implementation of single stream recycling.

1:14: 00 Paige seconds Dylan Motion

1:14:01 – Dylan considers it friendly if the wording is – exploring options for recycling 9(nstead of implementation)

1:14:53 Denise R. Barber seconds the amendment to the amendment

Lori FitzGerald asks if there is data to support the cost will go up if using universal? You are paying for pick up anyway – an all-in-one bin is easier for many.

1:17:09 Sean Morrison states to him, in the end saving landfill costs is most important. The City should add language that captures the cost of savings by diverting the landfill.

Lowell Chandler says he is against the amendment. He feels that universal single stream recycling can save a lot of money.

1:21:08 Vote on Amendment 6 votes For and 13 Vote Against. The Amendment fails and the original language in the document will be used.

Bob Schlack asks if Pacific Recycling is the only option in town. Are they double dipping? He thinks the trucks that pick up the bins are from Pacific, but they are City Trucks doing the pick up. Denise Barber responds that the public wants everyone to benefit from recycling. There is no double dipping,

Diana Hammer would like to see the City's Solid Waste goals approved earlier included in this Recommendation. They are 50% waste reduction by 2040 and 35% waste reduction by 2030. This is a friendly motion, approved by Denise R. Barber, the author.

Paige R. Myers would like to add funds for public education regarding recycling in the sentence : *Universal single-stream curbside collection for the City of Helena with funds for public education regarding recycling.*

1:30:15 Chair Ben Kuiper says this a friendly approval and the language is added.

Sean Morrison questions the number of respondents in the city vs. county. City demographics have increased by 4-5k persons while the county numbers have increased significantly more. Ben K. and Denise B. explain that the HCC is only considering city respondents.

1:34:48 Diana Hammer moves to strike information in the recommendation that includes county information. Paige Myers seconds the motion.

1:36:56 Chair Ben Kuiper calls for a vote to strike county information. All members were in favor, none opposed.

1:41:04 Vote on Entire Waste Management. Role call vote. 17 For, 2 against. Recommendation passes.

1:43:55 Recommendation on HCC Priorities – Diana Hammer explains the document and feels it is important for the Commission to have the HCC's priorities as they work on the 2025 year budget. The sentence needs to be added: *as well as the new strategic goals the Commission is considering adopting i.e., Improved City Services, Infrastructure and Sustainable Growth* – these are the City's newer not yet adopted strategic goals.

1:47:46 Ben Kuiper says as additions were added by the author we accept without dissent.

Lori FitzGerald asks when the original Priorities were voted upon and approved by HCC. Diana Hammer says last fall before all the new HCC members were present.

1:48:20 Pat Bik moves to approve the additions to the Priorities Recommendation. Paige Myers seconds the motion.

1:49:28 Chair Kuiper calls for a voice vote regarding the Priorities Recommendation. All were in favor, none opposed. Recommendation is adopted.

Officer

Officer Reports

Chair – Ben Kuiper – Chair Kuiper announces there will be a Public Forum Discussion about the HCC's budget recommendation on 5/22 room 326 from 7-9PM zoom and in person. The next HCC Full board meeting will be on Thursday May 30th from 7-9PM most of meeting will be to vote on the Budget Recommendation. HCC

members will receive budget docs that are completed before May 30th, however one last meeting with Commission is on May 29th, so info sharing will be fast.

Vice Chair- Lowell Chandler – The Pesticide Recommendation will be discussed at the May 1st Commission meeting. Documents for the MPO are still under legal review. We still are not sure who is participating. There is a City/County Growth Policy update on April 25th from 11-1:00pm in the City County Bldg.

Secretary – Diana Hammer – Diana defers to Emily Mowers with the Outreach Comm. Update

Treasurer – Lori FitzGerald Budget updates – Lori says there is a good group of volunteers for the Budget with 8 persons participating. Sydney Ausen attended the April 17th meeting – see details below.

New Business

Update on a yearly HCC calendar – moved to next meeting due to time. Outreach Committee will put this together.

Commission Attendees' Reports –

4/3 Lori FitzGerald – no update

4/8 Anna Kratz – no update

4/17 Sydney Ausen –

: City departments presented “baseline budgets” for FY25, leaving room for the Commission to receive additional funding requests throughout the budgeting process. Many

department budgets were projecting minimal base budget increases from FY24 (3-4% increase), mostly due to expenses associated with computer software updates. The base budget does not include funding for sidewalk programs, solar loan programs, or community grants. These programs would need to make recommendations for funding from the general fund. After budget presentations, the Commission also heard a presentation on the Sustainability Audit and projected savings from projects implemented.

General Fund:

● Reserves

- Projected FY2024 ending cash balance: \$5.65million, 60 day operating reserves
- \$1million recommendation for Capital Funding in FY25 (general government investments)
- Contingency Reserve of 2.57 Million- no additional funding projected at end of FY24

● General Capital

- 1.6 Million for General Capital facility improvement requests
- \$705,000- Facility Improvements (includes boiler replacement @ Fire station)
- \$378,500- Police
- \$459,250 Parks Maintenance (tennis court rebuild by Civic Center)
- \$68,960 Industrial Facilities (truck)
- Expenses
- \$28.6 Million
- \$247,000 revenue over expenditures that can be utilized
- Included: base operating costs, police contract changes, Health insurance decrease, operating transfers to other funds
- Not included: COLA, Solar loan program, sidewalk program, community program grants (decisions that the Commission has to make throughout budgeting process)
- Funding these would have to come from cash reserves, last year Solar and sidewalk program were funded through ARPA savings funds.
- %COLA will impact how much \$\$ is left in revenue over expenses to allocate to these programs.
- other= impacts to enterprise funds and special review funds
- State moving forward with 4% COLA, County with 3.5% COLA.

Commission Budget

- Most significant increase in budget was in supplies and materials
- FY24 adopted budget for supplies and materials = \$30,494
- FY25 preliminary for supplies and materials = \$96,201
- Budget increase reflects requests from the Commission for computer

equipment and software, new phones for Commission, etc.

■ “One meeting agenda software” to replace current Novus software leads to a 75% increase in costs this year but stabilize after FY25

● Budget for “purchased services” reflects \$\$ allocated for local government review (\$57,000) which would be absorbed back into general fund if ballot measure to undergo review does not pass.

City Manager Budget

● Projected FY24 \$741,527

● Proposing \$743,490 preliminary budget for FY25

○ Includes citywide software “Be Heard Helena” public engagement software

City Finance Budget

● Projecting 3.1% decrease in budget from FY24, largely due to “Project Manager” position leaving finance division and moving to Transportation services

15,

City Attorney Budget

● Projecting 3.4% increase in budget from FY24, related to office expansion and computer software

● Victim services projecting 12% increase from FY24 related to reclassification of victim services position

Human Resources Budget

● Projected FY25 budget of \$571,165- slightly down from FY24

● Status quo budget

Helena Municipal Court Budget

● Projecting FY25 budget of \$753,304, 4% increase from FY24 due to salaries and benefits

Sustainability plan/ audit update

● ASHRAE Level II Audit and Solar Feasibility Study @ Bill Roberts Golf Course and Waste Water treatment plant

● Final report included utility savings, implementation costs, GHG emissions savings

● Report did not recommend any energy conservation measures (ECM's) at Civic Center

● Recommend new boiler at Law and Justice Center

● Audit identified ECMS that would lead to \$337, 560 in utility savings/ year and 1,323 metric tons of carbon saved

● Implemented ECM's will result in \$115,650 in utility savings/ year and 400 metric tons of carbon.

Coordinator Report – Peggy Benkelman – Commission Meeting 5/6 and 5/20 – Paige volunteers to cover these dates. Peggy B reminds members that there is no proxy voting. A member must be in attendance, either by zoom or in person, at a meeting for their vote to count.

Outreach Committee Report – Diana Hammer - New water bill insert is \$540 vs. the \$650 budgeted for the item. HCC may purchase new swag: bandanas with HCC districts, pens and yard signs.

HCC Volunteers to attend these advisory boards/committees and give written updates

City-County Planning Board – John Andrew – growth policy update in regards to county only.

Helena Public Arts Committee – Paige R. Myers – a California artist was selected to paint the tunnels, but the Commission rejected the HPACs decision, and chose someone local. The HPAC may consider writing a recommendation to the Commission regarding how these decisions are made.

Non-Motorized Travel Advisory Council – Lowell Chandler – no update

Citizen Conservation Board – Sydney Ausen - absent

Solid Waste Master Plan Meetings – Denise R. Barber – already discussed with recommendation.

City-County Library Board – Anna Kratz – their budget was discussed.

Golf Advisory Board – Bob Schlack – advertising done for golf carts, fence repair by Grizzly Fence, little to no winter damage on the course. The business is growing – 32 teams at 1st tournament. There is a ladies tournament on April 30th and on April 22nd the men's league begins.

City-County Consolidated Parks Board – Pat Bik - Angie Hubbard, city planner, presented information on Sierra Park, adjacent to Rossiter School. The City will invest \$28,000 to be added to county and private fundraising for a total of \$40,000 for upgrades to the irrigation system, expansion of the playing fields, and other improvements. **Other news:** Ten Mile hiking area, owned by Prickley Pear Land Trust, will add 180 acres later this year. The Northwest Baseball Park will be renamed for coach Mike Miller. The Memorial Park playground equipment has been updated, having some of the wooden fort structures, and adding a new firetower slide, which is popular with the kids. The Parks Dept. is working on a Vegetation Management Policy to be present to the City Commission soon, likely after budget season. Open Lands have completed all prescribed during for the season, and all went well. City Parks Dept. has purchased a turf sweeper, which aids in tidying up parks in the spring. City restrooms at Memorial Park, Barney Park and Civic Center are now open for the season. Civic Center ballroom floor will be replaced this year, and the parking lot will be upgraded and repaved. Tennis courts at Civic Center will be included in Parks Department's 2024-25 budget request, asking for city funds to supplement \$200,000 in ARPA funds. (Asphalt resurface about \$300K, stressed concrete funs about \$400K). More public meetings and discussion on the proposed downtown bathroom are needed before finalized plan. Another \$200,000 in ARPA money has been set aside for the bathroom.

Affordable Housing Trust Fund- Pat Bik & Brenda Valerio – no meeting

Water Quality Protection Board – Diana Hammer – speakers at meeting discussed exempt well drilling, subdivision review process, water quality and quantity.

Motion to adjourn made by Sean Morrison and seconded by Lori FitzGerald.

2:08:24 **Meeting Adjourned**