



City Commission Special Budget Work Session
May 1, 2024 – 4:00 PM
Zoom Online Meeting; <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87385394460>
City County Building, 316 N. Park Ave., Room 326

Time & Place

A City Commission Special Budget Work Session was held Wednesday, May 1, 2024 at 4:00 p.m. via Zoom Online Meeting ID: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87385394460> and physically in the City County Building, Room 326.

Call to Work Session, Introductions

(00:00:00) The following responded present, either via zoom or in person:

City Attorney Dockter
City Manager Burton
Commissioner Dean
Commissioner Shirtliff
Commissioner Logan
Commissioner Reed
Mayor Collins

Commission Comments, Questions

- (00:00:46)** Commissioner Reed proposed reconsideration of the 512 S. Raliegh sidewalk variance request. Consensus was reached.
- (00:02:05)** Commissioner Dean asked Attorney Dockter about reconsideration procedures.
- (00:02:22)** Commissioner Reed discussed adding low decibel noise regulation to the City Code, citing public comment. Consensus was reached.
- (00:03:16)** Mayor Collins informed the public of a Commission quorum during a recent Rotary Club meeting.

Recommendations from the Helena Citizens Council

- (00:04:05)** HCC Representative Kuiper discussed recent and upcoming meeting agenda items.

Report of the City Manager



A. Solar For All Grant Update

- (00:04:47)** Grants Administrator Opitz presented Item A.
- (00:06:40)** Commissioner Logan asked Administrator Opitz and Environmental Regulation Pretreatment Manager Anderson about public access to information.

B. Firetower Restoration Project Update

- (00:08:28)** Parks & Recreation Director Smith presented Item B.

Department Reports

A. Vegetation Management in Parks

- (00:09:20)** Parks Superintended Marr presented Item A.
- (00:13:24)** Commissioner Shirliff asked Superintendent Marr about timelines for signage.
- (00:13:43)** Commissioner Reed asked Superintendent Marr about herbicide distances from playgrounds and if the public will be notified about the type of herbicide used.
- (00:14:30)** Commissioner Dean asked HCC Chair Kuiper to notify the group of the update.

B. Kindrick Legion Field Project

- (00:14:51)** Parks & Recreation Director Smith presented Item B.
- (00:15:55)** Commissioner Dean asked Director Smith about the projected timeline and scope of the improvements.
- (00:17:19)** Manager Burton asked Director Smith about the Legion's organization affiliation for installing turf.

C. FY25 Budget Presentations: Fire; Police; Community Development; Community Facilities

- (00:17:38)** Finance Director Danielson, Fire Chief Campbell, Police Chief Petty, Community Development Director Brink, and Community Facilities Director Sampson presented Item C.
- (00:25:26)** Commissioner Logan asked Director Danielson and Chief Campbell about the difference in General Fund preliminary and projected amounts.
- (00:29:00)** Commissioner Logan asked Manager Burton if values are subject to change following contract negotiations.



- (00:29:16) Commissioner Dean asked Chief Campbell about safety rate increases and property valuations in relation to insurance costs.
- (00:32:23) Commissioner Shirliff asked Chief Campbell to explain how overtime hours affects the overall budget and if increased staffing would help.
- (00:43:55) Commissioner Logan asked Chief Petty, Director Danielson, and Manager Burton about the projected and preliminary difference, and about the market-based pay steps.
- (00:46:57) Commissioner Logan asked Chief Petty about the effects of a Cost of Living Adjustment.
- (00:47:51) Commissioner Dean asked Director Danielson and Chief Petty about the dollar value of a Cost of Living Adjustment.
- (00:54:12) Commissioner Dean asked Director Brink and Manager Burton about land use planning funding compared to other communities.
- (01:00:43) Commissioner Reed asked Director Brink and Manager Burton about conditional use permit fees.
- (01:03:03) Commissioner Shirliff asked Director Brink about fee increase attributions and about how the community will be informed of the fee increases.
- (01:18:00) Commissioner Dean asked Chief Building Official Mack, Director Brink, and Manager Burton about building fee waivers and encouraging low-income housing development.
- (01:23:56) Commissioner Reed asked Director Danielson about funds transferring to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund.
- (01:33:18) Commissioner Dean asked Director Danielson about the demand for joint funds.
- (01:35:59) Commissioner Dean asked Director Sampson about project carryovers and past funding received.
- (01:41:45) Commissioner Reed asked Chief Campbell about a previously proposed fire suppression system at the fire station.

D. FY25 Budget Discussion – Commission Decision Points

- (01:24:00) Director Danielson presented Item D.
- (01:51:06) Commissioner Reed asked Manger Burton and Director Danielson about the effects of a Cost of Living Adjustment on the budget.



- (01:52:25)** Commissioner Reed asked Director Danielson and Manager Burton about how cash reserves work to fund ongoing expenditures.
- (01:55:34)** Commissioner Logan, Director Danielson, Manager Burton, and Commissioner Reed discussed the Cost of Living Adjustment competing with interests for community grants and loans
- (02:00:57)** Commissioner Dean explained her support for funding the 4% Cost of Living Adjustment and using ARPA reserve funding for loan programs.
- (02:04:40)** Commissioner Reed explained her opposition for using cash reserves for operating costs and a 3-3.5% Cost of Living Adjustment.
- (02:06:38)** Commissioner Logan explained his support for prioritizing a 3.5% Cost of Living Adjustment.
- (02:07:05)** Commissioner Shirtliff explained his support for a 4% Cost of Living Adjustment and loan programs.
- (02:08:29)** Mayor Collins explained his support for grant and loan programs as well as a 3.5% Cost of Living Adjustment.
- (02:08:43)** Commissioner Dean asked Manager Burton about budget impacts for the proposed 3.5% Cost of Living Adjustment.
- (02:10:18)** Commissioner Dean discussed moving forward with the Safe Streets for All Grant by satisfying requirements.

Public Comment

- (02:11:56)** Pam Attardo provided public comment, discussing the outstanding agreement for services regarding Firetower restoration. Manager Burton addressed public comment.
- (02:15:34)** Commissioner Logan asked Manager Burton for an update about the project during the Parks Department budget presentation.
- (02:15:50)** Tom O'Connell of the Heritage Tourism Council provided public comment, advocating for the Firetower restoration project.
- (02:18:22)** Christopher Averill of the Heritage Tourism Council provided public comment, advocating for the Firetower restoration project.

Adjournment

- (02:20:35)** There being no further business before the Commission, the meeting adjourned at 6:21pm.