

Minutes
Business Improvement District
December 13, 2012

Board Present: Andrew Ferrin, Garry Hackett, George Wheeler, Sheila Rice
Board Absent: Rebecca Hughes, Kris Harrison
Staff Present: Joan Redeen
Guests Present: Alison Fried

- I. **Call to order:** Andy called the meeting to order at 9:14am.
- II. **Guests:** There were no guests present at the meeting who wished to address the Board.
- III. **BID Board:** Joan reported that there have been two applicants for the one opening on the Board. Mark "Mac" Smith and Travis Neil have both applied to fill the vacancy. The Board discussed the applicants and decided not to make a recommendation to the City Commission as both applicants are good candidates. Joan noted that the City Commission will be making a decision at their 12/18 meeting.
- IV. **Approval of minutes from 11-8-12 meeting:** Sheila motioned to approve the minutes from the 11/8/12 meeting. George seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**

V. **Financials:**

Audit: Joan provided the board with copies of the FYE 6/30/12 audit. Sheila suggested that the board put the audit out to bid every three to five years. Garry added that a second set of eyes reviewing the audit annually would be beneficial. Joan noted that Mike Diekhans with Douglas Wilson has been our auditor but someone else at Douglas Wilson always reviews the audit before it is finalized. Andy inquired if there have ever been any issues; Alison reported that the only issue was prior to her time on the board and that was with management of the Johnson Hotel building and not collecting utility reimbursements from a couple of the property owners. Approximately \$7,000 was written off a few years ago from this issue.

Monthly Financials: The Board received the October financials via e-mail. There being no discussion on the financials Sheila motioned to approve the 10/31/12 financial statements which include the Balance Sheets, P&L, and the P&L/Budget comparison. George seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**

The Board discussed bank balances and anticipated grant payouts. Joan noted that a large check will be expected from the City sometime in the first few weeks of January; this check would represent the November tax payments. Joan added that she anticipates paying out the balance of Mauri Novak's residential grant before the next board meeting. Sheila motioned to transfer \$16,000 from the money market account to the checking account to cover the payout. Garry seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**

VI. **Grant Programs:**

Façade Grant Criteria: Joan provided a draft of the update to the Façade Grant program. Sentence #8 was modified since last month's board meeting. Discussion followed on a list of properties that Ellen Sievert has made George aware of; it lists properties that contribute to the historic nature of downtown. Discussion on adding line #17 to the façade grant criteria that notes that individuals may apply for either the one-story façade grant option or the two-story façade grant option, but applicants would not be eligible for both. Garry motioned to approve the revised façade grant criteria with the current version of sentence #8 and the addition of sentence #17 as noted. George seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.** Joan was instructed to update the website with the new grant criteria.

Joan noted that the Board was provided a rough draft of a potential art grant program last month, no further discussion was held on this program at this time.

Joan reported that she spoke to Mauri Novak yesterday about the status of his project. His project is done and he is awaiting one final bill before he submits to the BID for his final disbursement.

Stockman Bank has noted that they have paid out over \$351,000; Mauri will be submitting the receipts for what he has paid directly out of his pocket as well as his labor, he previously estimated his total costs to exceed \$455,000. Garry noted that he inspected the property and he is satisfied that Mauri is done and ready for final payment upon delivery of all receipts.

Joan informed the Board that Garry Hackett has submitted an update on the status of his residential grant on the Margaret building at 413 Central Avenue. His new estimate for completion of the project is October, 2013. Garry added that he plans to rent out the units as they are complete.

Discussion followed on the residential grant program and the fact that it is on hold until July, 2013.

Joan noted that she has had some inquiries and has instructed those individuals to draft a letter to the board asking if a residential grant would be considered. Garry suggested that the residential grant be reviewed between now and July 2013.

VII. Old Business:

Beautification: 1st Ave N Underpass: Joan informed the Board that the expenses for the project over the summer totaled \$18,786.31 and that included \$2,570 for the sealant. Joan added that half of the sealant remains so we are partially set for sealant for next year.

Downtown Sound System: Joan reported that Steve Cloutier, the electrician, has reported that the system is fully functioning, with the exception of the speaker by the Rocky Mountain Building which he can't access.

Pocket Park: Joan noted that there is nothing new to report at this time.

Traffic Signal Box 2013: Joan reported that she has received a bid for the installation of vinyl on 1st Ave North; the bid is from Clean Slate out of Bozeman and the total for the seven (7) boxes is \$2,632.62. MDT has approved the BID doing the traffic signal boxes and it has been implied that we work with Clean Slate. Joan noted that the budget has been \$1,000 for the large boxes and \$750 for the smaller boxes. Artists will be paid the difference between the bid from Clean Slate and what we've budgeted. Within the BID there are 21 total and we've completed 12, nine (9) remain to be done (two remain on 2nd Ave S). The Board inquired why we aren't doing the remaining nine all at once. Joan noted that it continues to generate buzz each year we do it plus it opens up the opportunity to additional artists and finally the management of the project is easier when it's spread out.

Holiday Décor: Joan informed the Board of the history of the décor and what role the BID and DGFA play (BID has always paid for the installation, City previously did the installation and now it's a private contractor; DGFA pays for the electricity and bought the lights; DGFA was providing the BID with \$1,000 for '09, '10, and '11 to put toward the \$5K installation bill). Joan noted that she is looking for new ideas as the lights do not show up whether they are on the trees or on the light poles. Her preference would be to see something more uniform throughout the BID (there are 144 period light poles located in the BID; some sort of décor on all of them). Alison noted that the shooting stars are over 10 years old and the other décor is the 'hand-me-down' décor from Central (much older than the stars). She added that the lights were purchased to put on the trees when they were 10 years younger and smaller in size. Joan noted that the issue with the shooting stars and the brackets that existed as a result of Cat Graphics replacing the banner brackets has been resolved – CMR High School's welding shop provided a modification. Joan asked that the Board start to think about ideas. Sheila noted that she'll bring it up with DGFA and perhaps we can create a holiday décor committee.

Downtown Great Falls Association: Sheila reported that DGFA just finished up the Parade of Lights and the Christmas Stroll. Both events were a success.

Team Trolley: Sheila reported that they are exploring how to keep the trolley downtown. Garry & Joan are both involved in Team Trolley. Garry noted that he has reviewed the tax returns and is concerned about repair expenses over the three-year period he reviewed (\$9K, \$10K and \$12K). Joan noted that she is not averse to the BID being involved and supporting the trolley financially if they wish to do that but she is not comfortable with the BID having ownership of the trolley, as it

would likely fall upon her to manage it. The team meets again next week and will continue to review the feasibility of keeping the trolley downtown.

Downtown Logo/Marketing: Sheila reported that NeighborWorks Great Falls received a grant for downtown marketing. They've taken into consideration the current downtown logo as well as GFDA's recent branding. The new logo utilizes an upgrade of the existing downtown logo and city-wide brand. She added that the partnership has appointed a marketing committee comprised of Joan, Jenn Reichelt, Jane Weber and Carrie Koppy. Sheila noted that the first year implementation budget is \$18K and NW's has an additional grant of \$8K to put toward that.

Downtown Partnership: Sheila reported the partnership has moved its December meeting to the 19th at 9am. They will be holding a planning session on 1/23 from 8:30am to 12:30pm. Discussion was held on membership and attendance at meetings. Sheila reported that a grant was made to the Rocky Mountain Building for \$4K utilizing \$1K from GFDA, \$1K from NW's and \$2K from the partnership (using membership dues money). Sheila noted that the New Market Tax Credits program is not available at this time so the partners involved are seeking additional funding sources and needed to buy additional time on the buy-sell agreement. Garry inquired about how long this grant provided an extension for the project, Sheila will explore that. Garry noted that GFDA informed him that this grant would be refunded if the project doesn't go through. Garry motioned to approve the BID funding \$1K to the Downtown Partnership if the partnership needs it. George seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Downtown Safety Alliance: Joan reported that Business Watch is being held on Tuesday 11/13 at 5:30pm. Joan noted that she is seeking sponsorships for the 2013 schedule; there are six meetings per year and currently there is one sponsor. Sheila committed NeighborWorks Great Falls to sponsor the January meeting.

Great Falls Development Authority: Joan noted that there is nothing new to report at this time. The Branding Alliance was due to meet monthly but no meeting has been held yet.

Johnson Hotel: Joan provided the board with an update on last month's elevator issue. She reported that she had a conversation with Randy Tarum and no letter has been sent to us or to the Great Falls Americans yet, he was awaiting bids for the repair work. Joan added that she met with Jim Keogh of the Americans and informed him of the importance of addressing the letter from Randy, once received. She informed Jim of the Board's decision that he'll receive a notice to vacate if he doesn't pay what the association requires within 10 days. Joan added that there are differing stories on this issue; Jim noted that the athletes were stuck in the elevator, it was not intentional vandalism. Joan also stressed with Jim that the BID office must be informed when the team is in the building; the office space is sufficient for two people so if they are using other rooms in the building the BID must be aware. Joan reported on issues with another incubator tenant, Exergy. Currently they owe rent for October, November and December as well as two utility reimbursement billings (6-months' worth of utility reimbursement since that is billed quarterly). They currently have a balance over \$800. Joan served them with a 3-day notice to pay rent and is awaiting their response; they have until Monday to respond. The next step will be a 10-day service filed Monday, if there's been no response by that time.

Montana Downtown Conference: Joan reported the financial status of the conference. We had 17 sponsors compared to five last year in Bozeman. All remaining funds will be transferred to the Coalition bank account or to Billings (next year's host) if that bank account is established. Registrations were over \$5,500; sponsorships, including in-kind, was over \$10K. Income for the conference was over \$15K; expenses, at this point, are over \$8K. Bozeman forwarded \$2K this year to get Great Falls started. Any balance remaining after all bills are paid, will be forwarded to Billings to begin working on the 2013 conference.

Parking Commission: Joan reported that a new high-tech parking meter has been installed in the parking lot of the library. This meter has been installed for a test-period to see how well it works and how it's received.

Personnel: Joan noted that minimum wage increases effective January 1, 2013. This increase will affect Gail who does our trash removal and Eddie who is our janitor. Discussion was held on Joan's

upcoming 4-year anniversary and review; Andy and Garry will meet with Joan privately following the Board meeting.

Work Plan: Joan reported that the BID continues to work the Work Plan.

VIII. New Business:

Downtown Tax Valuation Study: Joan reported that Joe Minicozzi has wrapped up his study. He provided three additional webinars; the original presentation followed by detail specific to Great Falls and also a presentation for our City and County GIS folks. The key is that we need to seek out development of the lesser producing areas within the BID on the map that Joe has created for us. Discussion followed on the parking lot located on the south side of the 200 block of 1st Ave South, as just one example within the BID as a possibility for development and therefore increased tax revenue. Joan noted that it will likely fall on the Downtown Partnership to push for development, with support from the BID.

River's Edge Trail: Joan provided the Board with a copy of the River's Edge Trail year end update, with their compliments of what the BID has accomplished this past year.

IX. Public Comment:

No public comment at this time.

X. Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 11:02am.

Andy Ferrin, Chair

Joan Redeen, Staff

Date: _____

Date: _____