

**Minutes**  
**Business Improvement District**  
**October 10, 2013**

Board Present: Andrew Ferrin, Garry Hackett, Kris Harrison, Sheila Rice, Mauri Novak, Mac Smith  
Board Absent: Travis Neil  
Staff Present: Joan Redeen  
Guests Present: Alison Fried, Mike Diekhans, Jolene Bach

I. **Call to order:** Andy called the meeting to order at 9:02am.

II. **Guests:** Introductions were made. Mike Diekhans is the BID's auditor with Douglas Wilson. He reported that the audit went well and is nearing completion; a rough draft is being finalized. No large adjustments were made, no concerns, no formal recommendations, he did recommend that we continue to follow the procedures already set in place. The treasurer will continue doing the bank reconciliation on a monthly basis; board members need to compare numbers to budget to the prior year to be sure there are no issues. Mike expressed concern about grants payable. Discussion was held on current grants payable and grants criteria/policies/procedures. Joan noted that all grant programs remain accessible by the general public. Sheila noted two key questions that need to be answered: how far out do we extend on grants and; what do we want to incentivize? The board will hold a work session to address our grant programs. In the interim, Joan was instructed to inform potential applicants "the Board is reviewing grant guidelines as they've already met their budget this year".

Jolene Bach reported on the status of the Roberts Park Playground project. They remain \$1,100 shy of hitting the \$10K to receive the BID's match of \$10K. The quote for equipment is \$15,745 not including installation; they have installation lined up. The surface is the issue; quotes for possible surfaces range from \$12K to \$24K. They are looking for an attorney to draw up an agreement for the property owner to sign noting that he will maintain the park and that it will be open for use to other residents downtown. Mac committed to this task. The park will remain open during daylight hours. They have installed two new lights and a security camera that is tied into the GFDP. Discussion followed on the scope & status of the project. Jolene will continue to keep the board informed. Jolene reported that Great Falls Development Authority is meeting with all of their investors. The BID previously had committed to invest \$500 per year for the past five years. GFDA would like the BID to consider increasing the investment to \$1K per year for the next five years. Jolene reported on GFDA's activities.

Garry expressed concern about a recent article *Chasing the Silicon Prairie* in Sunday's Tribune where Brett Doney was quoted discussing the BID's Incubator. Garry inquired with Jolene about what the BID could do to improve the incubator so that it could be a better tool for GFDA. Joan noted that she inquired directly with Brett via email and he responded that Missoula and Bozeman have been able to invest a great deal of money in their incubators as a result of their universities. Brett did suggest that the BID list their vacancies on LoopNet. Joan noted there are currently three (3) vacancies and the United Way space will be vacant in early November. Jolene noted that GFDA cannot steer their clients toward any one specific location in town but they always inform companies about the incubator. She did note that GFDA staff should tour the incubator to become more familiar with it. Joan informed the Board of the history of the incubator. She added that she refers individuals to GFDA and Rebecca of the Small Business Development Center when potential new businesses inquire about the incubator. The Board instructed Joan to list the incubator vacancies on LoopNet and on Craigslist.

III. **BID Board:** Joan provided the board with a calendar of board meetings for 2014; monthly board meetings are currently scheduled to be held on the second Thursday of every month at 9am in the BID office through 2014.

IV. **Approval of minutes from 9-12-13 meeting:** Sheila motioned to approve the minutes from the 9/12/13 meeting as presented. Mac seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**

V. **Financials:**

**Monthly Financials:** No financials were prepared for the Board to review and approve yet, as the bank statement just arrived.

**Audit:** Reported above under Guests.

VI. **Grant Programs:**

**CTEP:** Nothing new to report on the CTEP at this time.

**Grant Applications:** Joan reported that the Board received three grant applications via email.

**April Spaulding Photography:** Garry motioned to approve the Business Incentive Grant application for April Spaulding Photography for \$1,100. Mac seconded. Mauri abstained. **Motion passed.**

**Belles & Lace Bridal:** Sheila motioned to approve the Business Incentive Grant application for Belles & Lace Bridal for \$2,160. Mauri seconded. Andy abstained. **Motion passed.**

Mac motioned to approve a new business interior grant for Belles & Lace Bridal for the maximum interior grant funds of \$2,280. Kris seconded. Andy abstained. **Motion passed.**

Joan provided the Board with a proposed banner that would be hung on buildings for projects the BID is involved with. The banner would measure 3'x5'. Suggestions for change to the proposal were made; Joan will continue to pursue.

VII. **Old Business:**

**Beautification: Holiday Decor:** Joan informed the board of the history. The BID has worked with Steve Jonas the past three years; we're awaiting a quote from Steve for this year's installation. DGFA has requested that the BID fund the difference in cost of \$672 for purchasing new LED lights (\$924) versus incandescent bulbs (\$252). The BID has budgeted \$6K for holiday décor. The Board instructed Joan to find out how much Jonas will charge for the installation this year and, provided it's within the budget, DGFA could proceed forward with ordering LED bulbs and the BID would cover the difference. The Board is to be notified accordingly.

**Roberts Park Playground:** Reported above under Guests.

**Trees:** Joan provided the Board with copies of the Adopt-a-Tree signs. Mac inquired about the program, Joan will provide that information. Joan reported that she is trying to figure out installation of the signs. Joan informed the Board of the issue with the tree in front of Kaufman's Menswear; Ike requested a tree be trimmed a few years back, the branch has now fallen into their sign on the building and broken the letter 'a' with a repair estimate of \$500. Ike has submitted a claim to the City and our insurance agent has been informed as well.

**BID Development:** Joan reported that she met with the City to begin the discussion of possibly expanding the BID. The City is going to run some estimates. Joan noted with these estimates we'd be able to provide potential property owners with tangible benefits the BID could provide if expansion took place. Joan provided the Board with copies of the map that reflects the Downtown Master Plan boundaries, the TIF boundaries and the BID boundaries.

**Downtown Great Falls Association:** Joan reported that Martin has given his notice; his last day is October 22<sup>nd</sup>. Sheila reported that DGFA will go without staff for a time; they will contract out various tasks.

**Downtown Chicks:** Joan reported that the Chicks are working on creating a *Guide to Downtown Great Falls*, similar to the CVB's *Guide to Great Falls*. They will be printing 30,000; it'll be 100 pages and good for 2014. Advertising rates were provided to the Board; ¼ page (business-card size) ad sells for \$180. Joan suggested that the Board consider placement of a small ad.

**Team Trolley:** Sheila reported that the trolley had close to a breakeven season. Revving up for the Luminaria tours; 1/3 of the annual income comes from the Luminaria tours. Tours will run daily beginning December 1<sup>st</sup>, departing from Paris Gibson Square.

**Downtown Partnership:** Sheila reported that the Partnership is holding their annual meeting on October 23<sup>rd</sup>; with a membership social from 4:30pm to 6pm at the Davidson Skywalk.

**Downtown Safety Alliance:** Joan reported the next Business Watch is Tuesday, November 12<sup>th</sup> and the topic is Security Systems Options. Location to be announced.

**Johnson Hotel:** Joan reported that United Way gave their notice, they will vacate by November 3<sup>rd</sup>. Joan noted that she will be acquiring a new vacuum cleaner.

**Parking Commission:** Joan reported that the Parking Commission still has one opening.

**Personnel:** Nothing new to report on personnel at this time.

**Work Plan 2013-2014:** Joan reported that the BID continues to work the Work Plan.

VIII. **New Business:** Joan provided the Board with the information on the New Pantages Theater; a theater group that is working to create space in the Rocky Mountain Building. They are working on raising \$1.25M and have to goal to be open by 2015; they are partnering with Paris Gibson Square.

IX. **Public Comment:** No public comment at this time.

X. **Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 11:01am.

Andy Ferrin, Chair

Joan Redeen, Staff

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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