

Business Improvement District
October 13, 2016

Board Present: Andrew Ferrin, Garry Hackett, Jason Madill, Travis Neil, Max Grebe
Board Absent: Sheila Rice, Kris Harrison
Guests Present: Dan Hollow, Brett Gaare
Staff Present: Joan Redeen

- I. **Call to order:** Andy called the meeting to order at 9:02am.
- II. **Guests:** Dan Hollow, President of Benefis Foundation, presented on the proposal Benefis is making for building a new emergency room; the foundation is presenting to many community groups to explain the plan. They hope to break ground Spring, 2017. Current emergency room was built 18 years ago and sees 35K patients per year; they are in need of updating/upgrading and more space. Brett Gaare, with Douglas Wilson, provided the final audit to the Board. He reported that there was no finding this year; actual expenses were \$20K less than budgeted. He recommended that budget amendments be made as we work through our fiscal year, if needed, but he encouraged the board to stay within the budget.
- III. **Downtown Great Falls Association:** Joan reported that DGFA is holding their quarterly membership meeting on 11/17 in Times Square; it will be a holiday social. Customer Appreciation is being held on 11/10. Joan reported that the trolley is quiet, for the moment; Luminaria Tours are next up in December and are already booking. Ghost Tours are being held the last weekend in October; the tours were sold out within two days. Another quarterly art tour will likely be happening in November. The art collective has requested that the BID be a sponsor of their brochure, just as we were last year; they are publishing an updated brochure. Garry motioned to approve a \$300 donation to the Art Collective. Max seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**
- IV. **BID Board:** Joan provided new signature cards to the Board for signing; removing Mauri Novak and adding Max Grebe to the board. Joan noted that next month's board meeting is scheduled for 11/10 and she has been asked to present to Leadership Great Falls at 10:15 on that day so the meeting will need to be brief.
- V. **Approval of minutes from 9-8-16 meeting:** Garry motioned to approve the meeting minutes from the 9/8/16 meeting as presented. Travis seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**
- VI. **Financials:**

Monthly Financials: No financials were prepared for the board to review. The Board noted that they will review the audit and discuss it next month. Garry recommended a transfer of funds from checking to the money market; it was decided that funds will remain where they for now, due to anticipated upcoming grant payouts.
- VII. **Grant Programs:**

CTEP: Joan reported that the streetscape project will be finalized within the next month; payout should be completed in that time frame. There are light fixtures that remain to be installed in the 700 block of Central but the work is done otherwise. Garry noted that many lights are out throughout downtown; Joan reported that Northwestern Energy has been informed and they are working on checking all light fixtures so they are in working order before the Parade and Stroll. Discussion was held on the Residential grant program criteria; currently the maximum residential grants that can be approved are \$60K per fiscal year; no residential grants have been approved since 2014.

Grant Applications: Pennington: Joan reported that the Sidewalk Grant has been paid out.
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Brush Crazy: Joan reported that the Interior grant has been paid out.
Rocky Mountain Building: Travis recommended that we look at the grants that have been approved for the Rocky Mountain Building. Joan noted that these grants were approved in 2013, they requested an extension to June, 2017; the status of the grants can be reviewed next June.
Start Trying Other Programs (STOP): Joan reported that a Business Incentive Grant application was received from Start Trying Other Programs. The Board received the application via email; discussion

followed on what constitutes a new business as this business previously operated within the BID boundaries. Garry noted that these business owners were outside of the state for the past two years. Travis motioned to approve the Business Incentive Grant for STOP for \$2,200. Jason seconded. Garry abstained. **Motion passed.**

Be A Siren Shoppe: Joan reported that a Business Incentive Grant application was received from Be a Siren Shoppe. The Board received the application via email. Discussion followed again on the definition of a new business; Siren's Cove previously was opened on Central Ave with the same owners, but closed prior to January, 2015. Travis motioned to approve a Business Incentive Grant for Be a Siren Shoppe for \$850. Max seconded. Garry abstained. **Motion passed.**

First Call Resolution: Joan reported that an Interior Grant application was received from First Call Resolution. The Board received the application via email. Garry motioned to approve an interior grant for \$10K for First Call Resolution. Max seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Joan reported that a Façade grant application was received from First Call Resolution. The Board received the application via email. Discussion followed on what constitutes permanent improvements; the Board determined that painting the exterior soffit on the Strain building does not constitute a permanent improvement, it is considered maintenance. Travis motioned to deny the Façade grant application from First Call Resolution. Garry seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.** The Board noted that they will reconsider the application if FCR would be willing to do something more permanent.

Andy suggested that the Board review what classifies a new business; he noted that Downtown Dice was legally a new business with new ownership and a new name yet the board denied their Business Incentive grant application. The board determined the key is that the business is relocating within the BID boundaries. Discussion followed on the façade grant and permanent improvements; examples were Times Square and their roof; Umami and their A/C unit – these are considered maintenance issues. Painting is not considered a permanent improvement and is considered a deferred maintenance issue.

Joan provided the board with copies of the updated grant schedule.

VIII. Old Business:

Beautification: Holiday Décor: Joan reported that we continue to move along on the décor; we'll see how many are completed in the next month. Discussion on holiday lights; Jonas is on board to take care of this.

Parking Meter Art Project: Joan reported that the artists all have their meters; their deadline to return them is February 1st so they can be sealed and prepared to be put into place in the spring. The Eagle Scout project is moving forward on his end for this project.

Placemaking: Joan reported that the Montana Main Street grant application for the pedlet was approved for \$8K. Max is going to be working on the next phase of design; Joan is meeting with the City to figure out the logistics. The goal is to have the pedlet in place by May 1st. There could be other sources approached to contribute additional income to build more than one; the BID, NWGF, the Board of Realtors are all potential to be involved. The Board discussed the possibility of renting the pedlet to business owners. Joan noted that our guinea pig to test this out is Mighty Mo and they will be getting the pedlet free of charge as they have other expenses to factor in (parking fees to the City; Department of Revenue, etc.).

Sound System: Andy reported that the system is still shut down due to the construction taking place in the building where the main console of the system is located. Joan reported that she's called Good Vibrations; we have a top of the line system and every single system we might acquire will operate the same way due to the weather; our system is a wireless system, the reception is what's wireless. Good Vibrations noted that the issue we have is that we have the heart of the system in the 300 block and we are trying to reach the 700 block and the 100 block. They would prefer that our system be placed in the middle of Central, in the 400 block, for the best reception. The Board inquired if two antennas could be placed downtown. Joan will have Good Vibrations contact Garry about relocating the heart of the system to the 511 Central Ave building. Discussion followed on Sirius XM; it was noted that the BID has never paid for the Sirius subscription. Joan will look into that for getting it set up when the system is functioning again.

Banners: Andy reported that he took a look at the banners and the variety that is currently in place. Joan noted that the holiday banners will go out mid-November and will be brought down in January. She added that she'd like to see some variety but not the medley that currently exists with United Way, CM Russell museum and the Downtown banners. Jason suggested that banners be sold to local businesses for

advertising. Using the banners for marketing for local businesses was discussed. Joan will draft a banner policy for the board to review; this drafted policy will list the BID as the responsible party for the banners and will remove DGFA from the equation.

Downtown Partnership: Joan noted that there is nothing new to report at this time. The big news is the Main Street Grant.

Downtown Safety Alliance: Joan reported that next Business Watch was set for 11/10 and will likely be cancelled as it is election night.

Johnson Hotel: Joan reported that one vacancy in the incubator has been filled, a new tenant moves in on Monday 10/17; so only one vacancy remains, the largest space is vacant. She added that a window was broken from the hail storm in August in that large space and a pigeon moved in. The issue was not discovered for a couple of weeks as it was one of the vacant spaces; the issue has been resolved with the window fixed and the clean up being done.

Montana Downtown Conference: Joan reported that the conference was held in Butte last week; next year's conference will be held in Missoula. The presentations at the conference were very good and focused on the theme of Placemaking. Great Falls was the winner of the scavenger hunt for the second year in a row (the scavenger hunt was created just last year in Kalispell).

Parking Commission: Joan reported that the next Parking Commission meeting will be Monday, 10/17. Their proposed changes were approved by the City Commission and have gone into effect. Joan noted that City staff has said now is the time to focus on generating income; they are exploring creation of a parking assessment district. Any funds generated from this district can only be used for maintenance of facilities.

Personnel: Joan reported that the new Community Ambassador II who started work in September has been offered a full-time job elsewhere so he may be leaving.

Work Plan 2016-2017: Joan reported that the work plan continues to be worked.

IX. **New Business:** Garry reported that businesses are having difficulty differentiating between the BID and DGFA; he'd like to see the BID generate a monthly or quarterly newsletter so businesses know what the BID is doing.

Garry added that he has to upgrade the sprinkler system in his building and he'd like to see the BID create a grant to help property owners with this. The Board noted that the Developer grant will cover this.

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

XI. **Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 11:00am.

Andy Ferrin, Chair

Joan Redeen, Staff

Date: _____

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