

Business Improvement District
318 Central Avenue
February 13, 2020

Board Present: Travis Neil, Max Grebe, Shari Dolan, Matthias Schalper
Board Absent: Alison Fried, Jason Kunz, Jason Madill
Staff Present: Joan Redeen
Guests: Christian Leinhauser, Jolene Schalper, Erin Merchant, Brian Clifton, Tim Bass, Kellie Pierce

- I. **Call to order & Roll Call:** Travis called the meeting to order at 9:00am; roll call of all present, a quorum was established.
- II. **Guests:** Brian Clifton reported on the status of the Rocky Mountain building project; it's a \$15-\$18 million project; they've had a structural engineering analysis of the building and it is structurally sound; upgrades to the roofing system on the 4th floor are needed; Phase I was to repair the roof and install doors/windows, architect estimates were \$1.3M, bids came in at \$2.2M-\$2.6M; they are applying for a historic preservation grant with the state; they are going to utilize tax credits and will be going public with their crowd funding very soon. Discussion followed on the rumors; Brian refuted the rumors. Erin reported that they are starting a foundation in order to do their capital campaign successfully; they are looking for board members.
Tim Bass reported that he is the new owner of the Times Square building; he has plans for improvements over the next few years.
- III. **BID Board: Conflict of Interest:** There were no conflicts of interest noted among the board present. Joan reported that she has RSVP'd for the City's Board Training on 2/25 for herself, Matthias, Max, Shari, Jason Madill. There is another training on 2/26. Alison has noted she will be out of town for both dates; Travis might attend 2/25. Joan will inquire with Jason Kunz.
Joan added that the City sent out the Conflicts Disclosure Statement to the Board, Jason Madill is the only board member who has not completed this form yet.
- IV. **Approval of minutes from 1-9-20 Board meeting:** Max motioned to approve the meeting minutes from the 1/9/20 Board meeting, as presented. Matthias seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**
- V. **Financials:**
Monthly Financials: The Board received the December & January financials via e-mail. There being no further discussion on the financials, Matthias motioned to approve the 12/31/19 & 1/31/20 financial statements which include the Balance Sheet, P&L, and the P&L/Budget comparison. Shari seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**
The updated Budget vs. Actual report was provided to the Board.
Joan reported that the 11-month CD at Stockman Bank is up for renewal. Shari motioned to approve renewal of the CD for a term of 11-months at 2.25%. Max seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**
- VI. **Grant Programs:**
Grant Applications: The grant schedule for FY 2020 was provided to the board; current grants approved remaining to still be paid out total \$403,309.40. So far, this fiscal year, \$93,210.40 in grants have been paid out and grants approved this fiscal year total \$233,236.40.
Grant Applications:
Seeking Recovery: Joan reported that a Business Incentive Grant application was received for 501 Central Ave, for Seeking Recovery for \$1,500. The Board received the application via email. Their lease is effective March 1; grant will be paid out by April 1 to 501 Plaza. Shari motioned to approve the business incentive grant for Seeking Recovery for \$1,500. Matthias seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Grant Criteria: Max inquired, due to the current financial status of the BID, if the Board wants to consider suspension of some grants, specifically the business incentive grant. He inquired if the Board wished to consider prioritizing certain financial priorities over others. Travis was in agreement and pointed out that we are the only BID in the state that has grant programs, noting how unique these programs are. Shari noted she likes the idea of prioritization of where the funding goes. Joan reminded the Board that they can make changes to the grant programs anytime they wish. Matthias motioned to suspend all BID grant programs until the Board decides to review them and open them again in some form. Shari seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Discussion followed on the status of grants due to be paid out. The Board instructed Joan to write a letter to Noischt Properties that if the Board does not have a written update on both the interior and the façade grants by 3/13/20 the Board will rescind both grants.

It was noted that Alluvion has reported that they have completed their art grant; however, the Board does not consider the project complete based upon the original application. Alluvion has communicated that when the weather is permissive to painting, they will attempt to complete Central. The Board discussed Faster Bassett's interior grant; noting that the grant will not be paid out until the business is open. The Board instructed Joan to write a letter to Faster Bassett that if the Board does not have a written update with a target date to open by 3/13/20 the Board will rescind their grant; if a target date to open is received, the potential grant payout date will be moved to that date on the BID grant schedule.

VII. Old Business:

Beautification: ArtsFest MONTANA 2020: Joan reminded the Board that the BID approved \$15K last month, and that she will be requesting more funding for this year's ArtsFest. She will be submitting for an AARP grant; deadline for the application is April 1st, we would be notified by May 26th if we are approved and our project must be completed by November, so the dates are a perfect fit. Joan noted that she is not certain our ArtsFest will meet their requirements, but she will try. She added that last month Jason Madill asked that we explore sculpture, she reminded the Board this was something she'd already been exploring. The initial rough estimates for a sculpture constructed by Paul Hogan, the CMR High School welding teacher that the BID has worked with on the bike rack project, came in starting at \$12,000 depending on how extravagant the end result may be.

Discussion followed on sponsorships for ArtsFest MONTANA; it was noted that the BID is paying for the artists and the artwork while Tourism is funding the costs associated with marketing the event. Joan is trying to figure out a way to gain sponsorships, but how to recognize those sponsors.

Discussion followed on whether the BID solicits for sponsorships or simply solicits for donations. It was noted that the property owners involved last year have not paid anything to have the murals installed on their buildings. She expressed concerns on having enough property owners interested and buildings located outside of the BID; discussion followed on possible buildings for ArtsFest 2020. She is also working on figuring out how to sustain the ArtsFest long term.

Banners: Joan reported that with our recent hurricane force winds we took some hits on our hurricane brackets; we've lost four. She is working with Cat Graphics on this. She added that these brackets came with a 10-year warranty and were installed in 2017, she is inquiring with Cat Graphics about the warranty. Shari inquired about insurance. She is exploring the cost for new banners, as they are in need of updating with the new logo anyway. She is going to work on soliciting for sponsors for new banners.

Electric City Art Walk – Alley Lights: Nothing new to report on this at this time.

Flowers: Joan informed the Board that she has been discussing acquiring self-watering pots; Travis did solicit for bids and the original bid directly from EarthPlanter is less, since we are members of the National Main Street and the International Downtown Association. The bid was for 11 pots for our rock planters and 60 hanging flowers pots, the bid came in at \$12,216. An estimate of our savings was provided to be approximately anywhere from \$3,700 to \$5,000 over one season. The pots would

pay for themselves within two to three years. The EarthPlanter is the pot that Tilleraas has recommended due to the wicks that help with feeding/watering and the amount of water they hold. Matthias motioned to purchase the EarthPlanters for \$12,216. Max seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.** Discussion followed on the authority of the Community Director to make financial decisions, based upon the dollar amount and the adopted budget. Shari will draft a spending limits policy for the Board to consider.

Storm Drains: Joan reported that the City continues to work on exploring capacity issues and has noted that the more recent issues may simply be the intensity of the storms. Max requested that this item be removed from the agenda.

Downtown Great Falls Association: Joan provided DGFA's 2020 calendar to all present. Kellie reminded the Board that if those present wished to get the membership discount, they need to have their membership dues in by 3/1/20. She reported that they will hold one Music on the Mo in August; they will be hosting one brothel tour per month from May to September; Craft Beer Week planning is happening; the first Night Market will be 5/22 and a second will be in August.

Downtown Partnership: Joan provided the 2019 statistics to the Board; she pointed out that in 2019 there were \$8.8M in permits pulled. This is our second highest year since statistics have been collected since 2012; in 2015 there were \$10.7M in permits.

Microvisioning: Joan reported that the Microvisioning process has wrapped up; all the materials have been delivered from LPW; they will be available on our website shortly.

Personnel: Joan reported that this item will be removed from the agenda; Christian will be present and will report monthly under Great Falls Development Authority.

Wayfinding: Joan reported that Great Falls has been approved for a \$15K grant to use for our Wayfinding plan; we had asked for \$25K. The Board was reminded that the BID has committed \$6,500 to this project; other sources are contributing and the funds we are short will be found. The contract will be with Cushing Terrell.

Downtown Safety Alliance: Joan informed the Board that she does not plan to pursue the neighborhood walk program; she feels this program exists under the GFPD and the BID can continue to support GFPD's program.

There will be a press conference to present \$867 from the 2019 Coins for a Cause distribution to St. Vincent de Paul for their Angel fund. They provide showers and clothing to individuals who have job interviews; St. Vincent de Paul has reported that they've helped six people gain employment recently. She added that this is our largest Coins distribution; two private donors contributed \$400 in 2019. Discussion followed on the marketing campaign and its effectiveness.

Joan reported that the next Safety Alliance meets on March 3.

Great Falls Development Authority: Christian thanked the Board for partnering with GFDA; he has been on the job for five weeks. He is working on figuring out the best way to track and provide his data to the Board. In his first week on the job 35 targets were identified; Christian has met with 15 of those from the target list and five additional new referrals. These targets include businesses and developers; one area he works on is business retention and expansion (BREs). The target list is constantly being built, with a mix of key developers, businesses, etc. Christian asked the Board for connections to some property owners/developers and if there were any specific developers the Board might wish for Christian to pursue that are outside of Great Falls. Joan mentioned the program that Billings had a decade ago where Billings had a business exchange; a Billings business could expand and open in Great Falls and a Great Falls business could expand and open in Billings. Christian also reported that with his BRE visits he refers clients to the other tools GFDA offers; in the past month he has four new SBDC clients; four seeking gap financing; six expansions; one food & ag client; five new businesses moving downtown; two new start-up's and one client using GFDA's client attraction. He reported that GFDA will be holding Invest Downtown in Great Falls on May 7th; this was formerly the Downtown Showcase. They'll be having a speaker in the Missouri Room and then doing an Ignite-like session (5-minute presentations) focusing on five successes and five opportunities;

they'll then transition to NWGF with Barbara Wold doing workshops with retailers. Joan reminded the Board that the Professional Services Agreement between the BID and GFDA will expire on 6/30/2020. Any extension, or changes, the Board may wish to make will need to be taken care of no later than 6/11/20, the BID's June Board meeting. She added that GFDA is billing the BID on a monthly basis, the January invoices have been paid today.

Parking Commission: Joan provided the Board with the meter revenue comparison since the meter rate increased on July 1, 2020.

Personnel: Nothing new to report at this time.

Work Plan - FY 2020: The Work Plan for FY 2020 is being followed. A draft for FY21 will be provided by April, with approval needed by June.

VIII. **New Business:** DGFA Raffle: Kellie reported that the 2019 Christmas tree is being re-purposed into a custom table; raffle tickets are for sale now for \$20; only 1,000 tickets will be sold.

Urban Art Project: Joan reported that the a thank you note has been received for the BID's donation to the project; we will be asked to make a donation again this summer. The next reception is Monday 2/24 at Mighty Mo; it will also be a Raise-a-Pint night for the Urban Art Project.

Smoked American BBQ: Joan reported to the Board that a letter was sent from the BID to the Cascade County Commissioners.

Lighting: Joan reported that a board member requested that the City be asked to have electrical outlets installed on all of the period lights downtown. In inquiring with the City they noted the intent of the district was to provide street lighting and they do not believe that electrical outlets would be covered in the purpose of the district and therefore would require a vote of the property owners to make that change to the intent of the district. She added that the BID could fund this if it was something we wanted.

Downtown Office Open House: Joan reported that we are hosting our second annual open house, in conjunction with the Chamber so it will be a Business After Hours event from 4pm to 6pm on Thursday, April 16th.

IX. **Public Comment:** No public comment currently.

X. **Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 10:50am.

Travis Neil, Chair

Joan Redeen, Staff

Date: _____

Date: _____