

Business Improvement District
318 Central Avenue
Via ZOOM – Recording available via the City of Great Falls records request
July 9, 2020

Board Present: Max Grebe, Jason Kunz
Board Present via Zoom: Alison Fried, Sherrie Arey, Trista Besich
Staff Present: Joan Redeen
Guests: Christian Leinhauser, Jolene Schalper

- I. **Call to order & Roll Call:** Jason called the meeting to order at 9:02am; roll call of all present, a quorum was established.
- II. **Guests:** No guests present wished to address the Board, at this time.
- III. **BID Board: Conflict of Interest:** No board members had a conflict of interest, at this time.
Board Vacancies: Joan reported that Sherrie Arey was appointed to the Board. We have two remaining vacancies on the Board. Joan provided a copy of the application the City has received for Neal DuBois, which had been provided to the Board for review via email. The Board recommended that Neal DuBois be appointed to the Board. Joan will notify the City of the recommendation. Joan added that she continues to work on soliciting for board members, if Neal is appointed there will remain one vacancy. Joan informed Trista & Sherrie that she has board orientation packets for them.

Max Grebe arrived at 9:08am.

- IV. **Approval of minutes from 6-11-20 Board meeting:** Jason motioned to approve the meeting minutes from the 6/11/20 Board meeting, as presented. Trista seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**

V. **Financials:**

Monthly Financials: The Board received the March, April & May financials via e-mail. There being no further discussion on the financials, Jason motioned to approve the 3/31/20, 4/30/20 & 5/31/20 financial statements which include the Balance Sheet, P&L, and the P&L/Budget comparison. Sherrie seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Budget FY2021: Joan reported that the Budget will be presented to the City Commission on August 4th for formal approval.

Joan provided the final BID Budget versus Actual for FY2020. She explained that two line items were over budget for the fiscal year. Office Equipment was over budget because the BID had not budgeted for the purchase of a desk for the new Downtown Business Development Officer position; Beautification was over budget due to additional expense on holiday lights. Bottom line, the BID was not over budget.

Joan reported that the donation of \$2,000 for FY21 will be made to the Urban Art Project, as budgeted for annually.

VI. **Grant Programs:**

Grant Applications: The grant schedule for FY 2021 was provided to the board. Joan noted that the grant schedule has been updated for FY2021 and the cash flow formula has been removed from the schedule. Current grants approved remaining to still be paid out total \$329,214.00. Grants paid out during the FY2020 totaled \$167,825.80 and grants approved during the previous fiscal year totaled \$234,736.40.

Discussion followed on the grants remaining to be paid out and the status of those projects. Updates are needed from Kellergeist for their Interior Grant, Context for their Developer Grant, and Big Sky Select for their Interior Grant. Discussion followed on grants that have been on the schedule for many years and what the BID can do about those grants. It was noted that most of the BID's grant criteria calls for significant construction within six (6) months of approval; Joan will look into when that criterion was implemented. It was noted that no grants on the current schedule are pending payout. Jolene reminded that Board that from a project perspective the big projects take longer than developers anticipate; she added that many of these projects are stacked capital projects so if grants were rescinded and those grants were part of a capital stack that could potentially kill a project.

The Board instructed Joan to change the letter that requests updates from approved grant applicants to include a time frame by which construction must commence or the grant will be rescinded. Discussion on grant criteria followed. Max inquired how much the BID can realistically budget for grant programs annually. It was noted the net income for FY2020 was short \$144K, and grants approved totaled \$167K. Joan presented the Board with the average monthly costs to operate the BID, and the average monthly income, less grants. For FY2020 the average monthly income, less grants, was \$14,884 and average monthly expense was \$18,787. Joan also shared the property tax valuation schedule that she maintains, noting that in 2009 the annual BID assessment income was \$167K and this year we budgeted \$247K for assessment income. In addition, she shared the schedule reflecting specific parcels and their tax valuation increase since 2009. Discussion followed on putting a cap on the dollar amount of grants a parcel could be eligible for. Max appointed a committee to review the Grant Criteria, chaired by Jason Kunz. The committee will include Trista and Alison. The Board asked that Travis Neil be asked to serve on the committee as well.

VII. Old Business:

Beautification: ArtsFest MONTANA 2020: Joan reported that ArtsFest is moving forward; Cameron is completely on board, he has received one check, a second is on its way to him and the final installment will be paid to him when he is in town. The call for property owners for buildings has been sent out and the deadline is 7/17. At this time, Joan has two property applications in the office and is seeking more applicants. She noted that she still has not heard anything on the AARP grant, yet. If that grant is approved, it will be used to cover the costs of a community led mural that would be installed on the Times Square building. Joan added that she is seeking donors to be able to install murals outside of the BID boundaries; Miss Linda's has submitted an application pending funding that can be utilized outside of the BID boundaries. Discussion followed on the possibility of NWGF making a donation to the BID so that murals can be installed outside of the BID; Sherrie said she is reviewing the possibility. Joan added that checks were not cashed from last year's property owners for ArtsFest, so to keep it uniform the property owners will not have their checks cashed, unless they decide to make a donation to the BID.

Downtown Great Falls Association: Joan reported that DGFA is hosting their Sidewalk Sale on 7/25 and a Night Market in conjunction with ArtsFest on 8/21; she added that the Summer Market in June was very well received. They are also hosting Brothel Tours on the trolley one weekend each month. Chances are very high that Craft Beer Week will be cancelled for 2020.

Downtown Partnership: Traffic Signal Box: The TSB will be installed on the corner of 9th Street and 2nd Ave South. Artwork was selected last year, so no public call to artists will be made.

Wayfinding: Joan reported that Wayfinding continues to progress; the core team has been trying to figure out how to host a public event; Cushing Terrell is working on options. At this time, the event is being planned to be held online, with an interactive event that individuals will do on their own with potential to earn some prizes.

Downtown Safety Alliance: Joan reported that there was no meeting held in July, but they will meet next on Tuesday, August 4th at 9am via Zoom. She added that the GFPD Volunteer foot patrol is up and running and highly active. The commitment is two hours per week and can include grabbing lunch downtown while being an extra set of eyes. Joan encouraged everyone to submit an application to be a volunteer; she noted that there is brief training. Max inquired if it's making a difference, Joan noted that she believes it does as it is keeping folks away from bothering diners in our outdoor dining setting and pedestrians on street corners. Joan added that she is exploring phone tree options for downtown; the school district has sent ideas for what it is that they use, if pursued Business Watch funding would be utilized to cover any costs involved.

Great Falls Development Authority: Christian reported that he is entering his 6th month with GFDA. In the last 30 days, he feels it's been a good turning point. He's been doing a lot of market research for businesses GFDA can work with to bring to Great Falls. They have 20 solid targets. In the last 30 days there has been one announcement with Todd's Music opening; four new projects

have started; and three new businesses seeking to expand. They are finishing up the packaging on the block visioning; the web content is prepared and should be live soon; they are developing PDF's about Great Falls. They are exploring drone footage of downtown for marketing purposes. They also continue to work on project advocacy; they are advocating for the Milwaukee Depot apartments among other projects. Christian informed the Board about the potential for Calvary Chapel to move downtown and the issue with liquor licensing within a certain distance of a church. He informed the Board of the state statute that will allow the City to have a church within the vicinity of a business with a liquor license; City staff is exploring this option and it is anticipated that an ordinance will come before City Commission for their review in regard to this topic. Christian's focus is going to transition to target outreach. He asked the Board to share any ideas for businesses that they'd like to see in downtown Great Falls. They have Invest Downtown Great Falls on hold, but this event will happen, in person as soon as they are able; they are also working on a Downtown Pitch Night. Discussion followed on the fact that Great Falls made a national list of the Top 10 cities to move to after the pandemic, Great Falls came in at #10; the only City higher than Great Falls in Montana was Missoula. Jolene noted that this listing is the result of at least five years of hard work trying to get Great Falls name out in national media sources. She noted that GFDA hired their Talent Attraction Director in January and they have focused on the Livability Magazine in the past two years. There has been a multi-pronged approach in recent years; GFDA has invested heavily and they are all in when it comes to marketing Great Falls. They want Great Falls to be top of mind when individuals think about opening/relocating their businesses. Jolene added that their biggest win for the past month has been that Christian has been working closely with Justin Madill for the old NEW building; GFDA sees that as the largest opportunity for high wage jobs. She added that their primary focus is high wage jobs and they see this lead as their biggest win in the past month.

Johnson Hotel: Joan reported that the Johnson Hotel Condo Association is hosting a 100th anniversary of the building on August 13th. The Association has asked if the BID would be willing to sponsor the event on the 13th. The Board did not wish to support this event financially.

Parking Commission: Joan reported that parking enforcement went back into effect on 6/21; parking fine is \$20 if you are in the spot for over two (2) hours and a second fine of \$20 if you remain in the spot for four (4) hours, etc. The downtown businesses want enforcement, and enforcement has to be paid for in some manner. The PAC has been discussing pay stations and license plate recognition. Discussion followed on where expenses could be reduced. She added that the PAC is scheduled to meet on Thursday 7/16 and there remains two openings on the Commission and there is one application with the City.

Personnel: Joan reported that she is due to be on vacation from Friday July 17th and back in the office Monday August 3rd. She is working Tuesday-Wednesday-Thursday in the office and Mondays and Fridays at home. Christian will be out of the office on active military duty from July 20th to July 31st. Joan added that she went thru Alluvion's drive-thru testing and noted that Alluvion is encouraging everyone to get tested weekly; she added that the reason for her test was due to her pending trip (no symptoms or issues).

Work Plan - FY 2021: Joan reported that the Work Plan will be presented to the City Commission for approval at the same time as the budget, on August 4th.

VIII. **New Business:** No new business, at this time.

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

X. **Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 10:23am.

Max Grebe, Chair

Joan Redeen, Staff

Date: _____

Date: _____