

Business Improvement District
318 Central Avenue
Via ZOOM – Recording available via the City of Great Falls records request
February 11, 2021

Board Present in office: Jason Kunz
Board Present via Zoom: Max Grebe, Trista Besich, Alison Fried, Sherrie Arey, Neal DuBois, Karen Reiff
Staff Present: Joan Redeen
Guests: Christian Leinhauser, Nicole Girten

- I. **Call to order & Roll Call:** Max called the meeting to order at 9:09am; roll call of all present, a quorum was established.
- II. **Guests:** Nicole Girten introduced herself as the new government reporter for the Great Falls Tribune.
- III. **BID Board:** Conflict of Interest: No board members expressed a conflict of interest, at this time.
- IV. **Approval of minutes from 1-14-21 Board meeting:** Jason motioned to approve the meeting minutes from the 1/14/21 Board meeting, as presented. Neal seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**
- V. **Financials:**
Monthly Financials: No financials were prepared for the Board to review, at this time. Joan provided the BID Budget versus Actual as of 2/11/21; she reminded the Board that she provides this report every month, so the Board is kept informed of where we are regarding budget versus actual. Joan clarified that last month the Board agreed to pay out Jason Madill's façade grant at \$12K per month for 5 months, his total façade grant is \$61,250 so this month he is receiving \$13,250 with the remaining three payments of \$12K.
Joan informed the Board that a draft budget for FY22 will be presented to the Board at the March meeting, the Board will need to formally approve the budget by the May meeting.
- VI. **Grant Program Committee:**
Joan reported that drafts of the updated/proposed Business Incentive Grant and the Interior Grant programs were emailed to the Board for continued review. Review and final decision will need to be made before we commence budgeting for FY22, as these programs will impact our budgeting process. Joan noted that in order to present a draft budget next month she will need input from the Board on the two proposed grant programs and budgeting for them. The Board recommended that a draft budget be presented that includes \$60K for Interior Grants and \$30K for Business Incentive Grants. Discussion followed on the sentence, "11. Each parcel within the BID boundaries is eligible for a lifetime maximum of \$250,000 in interior grant funds." The Board recommended the addition of, "This term is retroactive." to this line item in the proposed grant program.
The grant schedule for FY 2021 was provided to the board via email. Current approved grants remaining to be paid out total \$234,910.00. Joan pointed out that in March review will be needed on the façade grant for 512-514 Central Ave; April review will be the Big Sky Select grants; June review will be The Gibson; and lastly Kellergeist's grants in November. She added that the grant schedule reflects \$61,250 paid out in grants this fiscal year; noting that this is being paid out in installments.
- VII. **Old Business:**
Beautification: ArtsFest MONTANA 2021: Joan reported that the Board received Cameron Moberg's proposal for ArtsFest 2021 for review, via email. Joan pointed out that the first section is for Ryan Preston for priming and clear coating for \$5K. The next section was for a mentoring mural, this would be located at Paris Gibson Square Museum of Art and Joan has informed Sarah Justice, the Executive Director of the Square, that she would need to find funding for this mural as it is located outside of the BID boundaries. Tier One would be 3-4 artists; 3-4 murals for \$40K, in addition we would need to add Ryan Preston for \$5K plus the cost of the clear coat. Tier Two would be 4-5 artists; 4-5 murals for \$45K, in addition we would need to add Ryan Preston for \$5K plus the cost of the clear coat. Tier Three would be 5-6 artists, 5-6 murals for \$50K, in addition we would need to add Ryan Preston for \$5K plus

the cost of the clear coat. Joan commented on the benefits of bringing out-of-state artists, they do entice tourists to come and see their artworks. Joan noted that this year she is asking Cameron to conduct another training seminar with local artists; she added that she'd like to set this up to be done every other year so we continue to increase our base of Montana artists who can produce large-scale murals. Sherrie mentioned that she is assuming that NWGF would still support a community mural outside of the BID boundaries. Joan noted that the workshop will take place on Friday 8/13 in the NeighborWorks Learning Center; Sherrie confirmed. Joan added that she has identified the location for the artists to practice after the workshop and is working on soliciting permission from the property owner. Max inquired about grants we might apply for. Joan reported that she is always looking for grants, she will inquire if we will be eligible to apply for the AARP grant again. She mentioned that the Montana Tourism grants might be a possibility, but we've already applied for that for Wayfinding Implementation; perhaps this could be investigated for ArtsFest 2022. Jason noted that he plans to negotiate with Cameron, he is working on the lifts for Cameron. He added that he will talk with Cameron about paying for the clear coat in place of having to pay for lifts. Max inquired what budget ArtsFest 2021 will come from; Joan noted that the bulk of it will come out of the FY22 budget but added that in the past two years we have provided him with a down payment in the fiscal year prior. We would provide him a down payment in this fiscal year and the balance would come from FY22. Joan added that so far this year we have paid \$22,500 in art expense and budgeted \$40K, leaving \$17,500 remaining in this year's budget for art. A down payment of \$15K could be provided to Cameron and the balance of ArtsFest 2021 would fall in FY22 budget. Jason inquired about the 1st Ave N underpass; Joan noted that she'd prefer to have that conversation next year as that mural will be 10 years old at that time. Cameron could be asked to propose costs for the work on the underpass this year, so budgeting for FY23 could be done appropriately, noting this would be more costly due to the square footage. ArtsFest MONTANA 2021 will run from August 11th to the 21st. Events during that time period were discussed. Joan noted that Paris Gibson Square Museum of Art wishes to host a reception for the artists; she's asked Seth to work toward a Downtown Summer Jam within the timeframe; DGFA will be hosting their Night Market. Trista reported that it is National Health Center Awareness Week 8/9 to 8/15 and they will be hosting several community events; she noted that Alluvion can partner with us on the 13th, 14th, & 15th. Jason inquired how many murals we received last year; Joan noted that we had 11 murals installed last year and paid Cameron \$55K. Alison suggested we work on acquiring sponsorships; Jason agreed and noted that he is working on a plan for that. Joan added that she has asked Great Falls Tourism to be a partner; Rebecca has responded that she is trying to figure out how GF Tourism can be involved. Max noted that he feels that ArtsFest should not cost more than our grant programs based on the property owner survey we conducted. He noted that if we prioritize ArtsFest monetarily over our grant programs he does not think that ArtsFest should exceed our grant programs. Jason agreed, but noted that we plan to budget \$90K for grant programs; Max noted that he feels it should not exceed any one of our grants programs and we plan to budget \$30K for Business Incentive Grants; if we wish to budget a great deal for ArtsFest we should budget more for grant programs. He believes we should budget \$30K for ArtsFest and make up the difference in outside grants or sponsorships. Neal agreed on considering the results of the property owner surveys; Sherrie and Trista felt there was value from the property owner survey. Joan noted, as she's said before, she believes that if we surveyed the consumers who utilize downtown the results of our survey would flip and the sound system would be the most important, followed by the murals. She asked for a maximum amount recommended for ArtsFest so that she can begin negotiations with Cameron and draft the budget for the March meeting. Sherrie recommended that we proceed forward based on Tier Two, \$50K; she inquired if there is a drop-dead date by which Cameron could either drop back to Tier One, if needed, or bump up to Tier Three. Joan will discuss with Cameron but noted that once the Board reviews a draft budget, we will have more concrete info upon which to decide. She requested that the Board be prepared to take formal action on ArtsFest next month.

Banners: Joan reported that she is working with Jason Kunz on creation of new banners.

Holiday Décor: Joan noted that there was nothing to report, this item will be removed from the agenda.

Sound System: Joan reported that we've had a few ghosts in the machine for a while; Mike with AirNetix has upgraded our software and has offered to send a new fixed master, at no cost to us for the equipment but we'd need to get Good Vibrations to install. She noted that she is going forward with this.

Downtown Great Falls Association: Joan reported that membership early discount ends on 2/28/21; after March 1 they will have to pay full price for dues. They are working on Craft Beer Week June 6-12. Joan informed the Board that Andy Ferrin is the new Board Chair for DGFA, as of January 1; she added that Andy served as the BID Board Chair for many years.

SAM Fest: Joan reminded the Board that Sheila Rice has inquired if DGFA could serve as the fiscal agent; noting that those duties would fall on Joan. She recommended to Sheila that she seek a 501c3; which DGFA is not. It was suggested that Sheila inquire if the River's Edge Trail could act as the fiscal agent, since they will be the beneficiary of the event. Joan sent an email to Sheila inquiring but has not heard back, yet. She added that Rebecca, with Great Falls Montana Tourism, had recommended two years ago that we host a walking tour of murals; Joan is going to inquire with Rebecca about holding these tours during SAM Fest. SAM Fest is scheduled to be held in September.

Downtown Partnership: TIF Programs: Joan reported that Kellie presented the proposed TIF programs to the City Commission at the 2/2 Work Session; they provided their feedback so now edits are being discussed. She added that she still hopes these programs go into effect July 1, but they will need to go before the City Commission again at a Work Session before they are ready for formal adoption.

TIF Application for Tree Work: Joan reported that a TIF application was submitted to the City; the City plans to present to the DDP at their February meeting. Upon approval by the DDP, and then the City Commission, she will be going out to bid on the tree work.

Wayfinding: Joan reported that the City has made edits to the proposed Memorandum of Understanding. The City and the officers of the DDP are all in agreement on the contents of the MOU; the City will be the owner of the signs and the DDP will maintain them for the first life cycle of 7-10 years. The City is finalizing the MOU so that it can be presented to the DDP for approval. Once approved by the DDP, the City Commission will be presented with the MOU and the Wayfinding Plan for formal adoption/approval; then it will go out to bid for implementation. She noted that she is waiting to hear back on the two grants that she has applied for at the state level; any remaining balance for implementation will be made up through TIF funds.

Joan reported that the Montana Main Street stat compilation for 2020 was sent out; the Board received it via email. She noted that there was over 20,000 volunteer hours contributed to downtown last year; the Great Falls Police Department seasonal volunteers played a huge role in this.

Downtown Safety Alliance: Joan reported that the Safety Alliance is meeting monthly again; there are some new individuals joining us. The focus remains safety Downtown, this is being stressed with the members of the Safety Alliance.

Great Falls Development Authority: Joan reported that Christian will be presenting his report to the BID Board one week prior to our meetings; it will be provided to the Board with their meeting packet when sent out by Joan. The Board received his first report yesterday because he was on military duty last week. Christian reported that he focuses on four main areas: Projects underway/pipeline; Business Retention & Expansion (BRE); Lead Generation; and Tools for Investment. He noted that they are currently working on 38 projects in their pipeline; this number is increasing over the last few weeks. For BRE visits, he attended the BRE course for the International Economic Development Council (IEDC). He is excited to start implementing some of what he learned. These visits are meetings with business owners to gauge the climate of their business; in January they conducted seven BRE visits, resulting in four new SBDC clients. They have partnered with Barbara Wold for a seminar on Customer Experience on 2/25 at 11am. She will also be conducting more one-on-one visits; last fall they had six downtown businesses and the feedback from the participants was very good. Lead Generation is also known as Business Attraction, making sure that our spaces downtown stay full; they are currently targeting 56 businesses. As they conduct market research, they are reaching out to businesses they think will fit

downtown. They've conducted meetings with two mixed use multi-family developers back east and are hopeful something productive will come out of these meetings. He added that tomorrow he and Jolene are meeting with a large chain restaurant as they were open to a meeting. Tools to drive investment, also content creation, include the downtown visioning; new content is being developed for the GFDA website as well as the new Downtown website when it is unveiled. He added that Ignite 2021 was recently held and they featured eight downtown businesses, as well as the announcement of the new co-working space where Lifestyle Real Estate is going in the 700 block of Central. Christian invited any board members to stop in and visit with him anytime.

Parking Commission: Joan reported that the City is going to be installing pay stations and the target date for the community to have to start paying for parking again is April 2nd. They plan to install meters on the side streets and 1st Ave S/1st Ave N, etc. with the pay stations on Central Ave. There remains one opening in the Commission.

Personnel: Joan reported that she is in the office one-day a week at this time. She added that she is an expecting grandmother; she noted that she may be working remotely from Missoula this fall.

Work Plan - FY 2021: Joan reported that next month a draft of the Work Plan will be presented, and formal approval will be needed no later than May.

VIII. **New Business:** Joan reported that during the HPAC meeting Jane Weber, the Chair of the National Heritage Area (NHA), asked if individuals and organizations would be willing to send letters of support for the NHA. Joan provided some history of the NHA, she noted that she was present at the very beginning before it was formally a 501c3, since it was born out of the HPAC. She noted that NHA's can help to promote areas for tourism and provide funding for projects, an example was given that the entire state of the Tennessee is an NHA. Joan inquired if the BID Board would be willing to write a letter of support. The Board asked Joan to invite Jane to attend the BID meeting to bring the Board up to date.

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

X. **Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 10:21am.

Max Grebe, Chair

Joan Redeen, Staff

Date: _____

Date: _____