

**Business Improvement District
318 Central Avenue**

**Via ZOOM – Recording available via the City of Great Falls records request
March 11, 2021**

Board Present via Zoom: Trista Besich, Alison Fried, Sherrie Arey, Karen Reiff, Max Grebe
Board Absent: Jason Kunz, Neal DuBois
Staff Present: Joan Redeen
Guests: Jolene Schalper, Jane Weber, Kellie Pierce

- I. **Call to order & Roll Call:** Trista called the meeting to order at 9:02am; roll call of all present, a quorum was established.
- II. **Guests:** Jane Weber updated the Board on the Big Sky National Heritage Area efforts; she serves as the Chair of the Board. She reported that this local effort began in 2014 with the Historic Preservation Advisory Commission (HPAC), the City/County historic advisory group. There are 55 NHAs in the US. She stressed that the effort is a coordinating effort, they bring people together who wish to do something and have the ability to do so. They cannot impact private property rights. They have completed their Feasibility study; it must meet 10 criteria; this is a congressional designation. They have five themes: The Missouri River; First Peoples; The Lewis & Clark Expedition; A Far Distant Land; and The New West. She shared a few of the projects they have worked on. She informed everyone that the NHA is asking for letters of support from those who wish to offer their support of the NHA, these letters are submitted with the feasibility study. She asked that anyone interested might act as an ambassador by helping to spread the word; get involved in future projects. She mentioned some ideas of ways the NHA could support Downtown. Joan reminded the Board that she serves as an ex-officio member of the HPAC and she was involved back in 2014-15 when this effort began. Sherrie inquired if the Board wished to discuss supporting the NHA. Joan reported that she inquired with the City attorney about whether the BID can support the NHA, if they wish to do so; the City attorney has noted that the Board can do that if they're following proper procedure. Sherrie added that the BID will benefit from the designation. The Board instructed Joan to put the NHA on the agenda under Old Business for the April board meeting.
- III. **BID Board: Conflict of Interest:** No board members expressed a conflict of interest, at this time.
- IV. **Approval of minutes from 2-11-21 Board meeting:** Karen motioned to approve the meeting minutes from the 2/11/21 Board meeting, as presented. Sherrie seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**
- V. **Financials:**
Budget – Draft FY 2022: Joan presented the Budget worksheet to the Board; this spreadsheet will be emailed to the Board following this meeting. Trista reported that the budget is as tight as it could possibly be and that with adding in two grant programs, as recommended last month, that would cause the proposed budget to have a shortfall of over \$27K. Trista recommended that, since the grant programs are already suspended, we leave the Interior Grant program suspended and only re-open the Business Incentive Grant. She noted her concern about not having reserves, and the need to create them, and that our current commitments exceed our revenues. She added that if we get to the end of the fiscal year and can open a small batch of funding for additional grants, we can review that possibility at that time. Joan provided the BID Budget versus Actual as of 3/11/21; 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 reminded the Board that we currently have \$234,910 in grants payable at this time. Joan also reminded the Board that the final budget for FY22 must be approved no later than the May Board meeting on May 13th. Trista noted that we can't continue to support development downtown at the risk of our own entity; if we can't sustain ourselves, it won't matter how many grants we allow for. She feels that given that the grants are already suspended it is easier to continue that suspension rather than to reinstate and then suspend again.

Max Grebe arrived for the meeting at 9:45am.

Alison reminded everyone that approved grants often run over multiple fiscal years; historically, many grants were never paid out. Trista noted that the figure we should be budgeting for grants is what we think we will be paying out in a fiscal year. She added that her concern is that the BID continues to compound a problem. She noted that what she is proposing is that we scale back on what new grants we approve until we balance out with what our current liabilities are and create some reserve. Joan reminded the Board that up until a few years ago the BID was 100% accrual basis; the Board requested of the auditor that we move grants to a cash basis. She noted that we should budget what we have as grants payable for our upcoming fiscal year but would not have a balanced budget if we did that. Max expressed his concern about making sure we are looking at the property owner survey results when budgeting. Trista inquired if the BID has a strategic plan; Joan noted that the Work Plan is our guiding document.

Trista Besich departed the meeting at 10:00am.

Discussion followed on budget priorities and renewal in 2029.

Monthly Financials: The Board received the January & February financials via e-mail. There being no further discussion on the financials, Karen motioned to approve the 1/31/21 & 2/28/21 financial statements which include the Balance Sheet, P&L, and the P&L/Budget comparison. Sherrie seconded.

Motion passed unanimously.

VI. Grant Program Committee:

Joan reported that Noischt Properties Façade Grant for \$8,000 is due for an update; Joan will send out a letter requesting an update.

Joan emailed the drafts of the proposed Interior and Business Incentive grant programs to the Board prior to the meeting. Max asked that the Board review them prior to the April board meeting, he instructed Joan to give the Board a deadline for comments on the drafts of the Grant programs, the Budget and the Work Plan of April 7th.

VII. Old Business:

Beautification: ArtsFest MONTANA 2021: Joan reported that she emailed Cameron that the Board had suggested Tier Two at \$45K and the clearcoat at \$5K but had told Cameron there had been no formal action taken, yet. She added that he can't book artists and flights until the Board formally approves it; Alison noted that the Board should wait to approve this item until the budget is resolved; she believes Cameron can make it work. Joan informed the Board that she is working on another AARP grant application and is searching for other grants. She added that she drafted a letter to solicit for sponsorships; she sent that to Jason and Alison for their review and it is being worked on. She noted that Great Falls Montana Tourism has said that they have budgeted funds for marketing/promoting ArtsFest. Max stated that he is against the proposed budgeted amount for this project; he would like to see the BID find alternative funding. He believes that if ArtsFest is creating the buzz that we believe it is than we should have interest from others to support it. Sherrie added that she feels that this year could be the last year that the BID puts a large sum into ArtsFest, create a large buzz that this will be the last big bang and others will need to step up and provide contributions to make it happen in future years.

Flowers: Joan reported that the flowers will be put in place by the end of May.

Sound System: Joan reported that the new part has arrived; she is working to connect with Good Vibrations to get it installed.

Downtown Great Falls Association: Joan shared DGFA's 2021 calendar of events; she added that it was emailed out and The Electric published it as well.

SAM Fest: Joan informed that Board that it appears the committee is pursuing utilizing the River's Edge Trail as the fiscal agent. She continues to debate setting up mural tours, that could possibly be a fundraiser for ArtsFest.

Downtown Partnership: TIF Programs: Joan reported that additional revisions were done to the program; the main revision was changing the managing entity from the DDP to the City. The programs are with the City; they go before the City Commission again on April 20th. She added that originally, she'd hoped these programs would be in effect July 1st, but she is doubtful that date will be the commencement date for these programs. Joan also informed the Board that the maximum funding for a façade grant under the proposed Façade program would be \$50K.

TIF Application for Tree Work: Joan reported that the DDP approved the TIF application so now it will be presented to the City Commission. She noted that if the City Commission approves this application the BID budget will need to reflect income of up to \$25K in TIF funds, with an expense of \$25K for tree work.

Wayfinding: Joan reported that the DDP approved the MOU between the City and the DDP; the MOU states that the City will own the signs but the DDP will maintain them for the first life cycle. The next step is the MOU, and the formal Wayfinding Plan will be presented to the City Commission for adoption. She added that she has applied for the State of Montana Tourism grant as well as a Montana Main Street grant for implementation. Once the City approves, she will be managing implementation of the city-wide wayfinding plan.

Downtown Safety Alliance: Joan reported that the Safety Alliance met last week; they continue to meet the first Tuesday of each month. She noted that here is a committee, comprised of Carol Bronson, Suzie McIntyre, Sandy Rice and David Saslav, that is writing a new Safety Plan as the most recent Safety Plan is dated 2013. She reported that the Directed Enforcement Team with the GFPD is still active downtown; Officer Larson is now carrying the BRIC officer phone.

Great Falls Development Authority: Jolene reported that Christian provided his report to the Board, it was sent to the Board with their meeting packet; Joan added that she will be making his report a part of the meeting minutes. Christian is currently attending professional development with the IEDC on real estate re-use. Christian reports on the four main areas he focuses on: Projects underway/pipeline; Business Retention & Expansion (BRE); Lead Generation/Business Attraction; and Tools to Drive Investment. Discussion followed on work force and potential overlap with Christian's position.

Parking Commission: Joan reported that the City is going to be installing pay stations and the date for the community to have to start paying for parking again is April 2nd. She added that payment for spaces will be done utilizing license plate numbers; individuals will be able to set up a wallet and reduce their fees. There remains one opening in the Commission.

Personnel: Joan reported that she needs hiring summer staff; someone to water flowers and some resource ambassadors. Sherrie recommended that the University's career services be notified. Max asked that the job description be sent out to the Board.

Work Plan - FY 2021: Joan reported that formal approval of the Work Plan for FY22 will be needed no later than May. Joan will email this to the Board with the Budget Worksheet, as well.

VIII. **New Business:** Joan reported that the Downtown office is hosting a Chamber Business After Hours event on May 20th; she asked the Board to make note of the date and plan to stop in.

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

X. **Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 10:48am.

Max Grebe, Chair

Joan Redeen, Staff

Date: _____

Date: _____