

**Business Improvement District**  
**318 Central Avenue**  
**Via ZOOM – Recording available via the City of Great Falls records request**  
**April 8, 2021**

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

- I. **Call to order & Roll Call:** Jason called the meeting to order at 9:01am; roll call of all present, a quorum was established. Max took over duties as Chair of the meeting.
- II. **Guests:** No guests wished to address the Board, at this time.
- III. **BID Board: Conflict of Interest:** No board members expressed a conflict of interest, at this time.
- IV. **Approval of minutes from 3-11-21 Board meeting:** Jason motioned to approve the meeting minutes from the 3/11/21 Board meeting, as presented. Alison seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**
- V. **Financials:**  
**Budget – Draft FY 2022:** Joan reported that all Board members received two Budget worksheets via email. Following last month’s board meeting, Max, Jason, and Alison met and prepared a new proposed budget. The Board has received the budget worksheet that was presented last month and the newly proposed budget worksheet from Max, Jason & Alison. Joan noted that she’d recommend the Board host a work session that has two topics on the agenda – budgeting and work plan for FY2022. Alison reported on the process of how they came to the proposed budget presented. The BID has \$19K in monthly expenses to operate and income of approximately \$20K monthly. That leaves \$1,000 a month to pay off the \$234,910 in grants payable. She noted that we could do this for one year and we should be ok to start over with grant programs and putting back programs we’ve scraped down to the bare bones. Joan noted that this newly proposed budget calls for no flowers, minimal snow removal, our trash removal would remain on winter hours for the entire year, no new grant programs would be released so that we could get caught up on what is approved on the grant worksheet, it would eliminate our commitment to GFDA, it eliminates all donations the BID makes, reduces our dues & subscriptions to the minimum, employee benefits would be reduced with just one employee, insurance could be reduced if the vehicles are in storage, our rent would increase if GFDA is no longer paying a portion of the rent, salaries would decrease but still include the commitment to DGFA per our 3-year agreement with them, and telephone/internet costs can be lowered as well. She added that if the City adopts the new TIF programs there is potential for property owners to seek those funds and BID to supplement any difference, if there is any difference. Neal inquired about balancing the budget; Joan noted that it has always been a balanced budget and she does not know what the City might do if the BID presented a budget that does not balance. He inquired how we’ve made up short falls in the past, Joan noted that we previously had a monthly income source from the Johnson Hotel building but we sold our ownership, and that one-time influx of funds went to pay grants. Alison noted that we know our income annually, there is no question to the income the BID is due each year. She believes this budget will allow us to get even within 15 months. Sherrie inquired if we received any COVID funds; Joan noted that we are connected to the City and the BID is not registered with the Secretary of the State we were not eligible to apply. She added that she met with Greg Doyon to inquire about the American Rescue Funds and whether the BID could receive any of those. His response was that between his department heads they could spend their allotment twice over; he did note that we can ask the City Commission. Sherrie noted that she was involved in the initial conversations when we started to discuss hiring a Downtown Business Development Officer with GFDA; she expressed concerns about the commitment that was

made to GFDA for this position. She noted that perhaps we consider deferring our commitment and give the following year; adding that this position hasn't had the time to work through what the capability of that position is and leaving GFDA without making that commitment right in the following years. Neal noted his agreement with Sherrie and added that we have contractual commitments with GFDA, and we must take that into account; he noted we could propose something less for a year including office space with hopes we contribute more later. Karen expressed her interest in a work session. Trista noted that the management of financials has been solid in what the process is; she noted that for the Board to set more of an expectation of what they want financial management to be like will be beneficial overall. The Board requested a Work Session be scheduled.

**Monthly Financials:** No financials were prepared for the Board to review, at this time.

VI. **Grant Program Committee:**

Joan reported that Mauri Novak was mailed a letter requesting an update on the status of the Façade Grant for \$8,000 for 512-514 Central Ave; the deadline for his written response was 4/7/21 and no response has been received. Neal motioned to rescind the façade grant for Noischt Properties for 512-514 Central Ave since there was no response to the update request letter. Jason seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Joan noted that Big Sky Select is due to provide an update on their three grants, a letter requesting a written update will be sent with a deadline of May 12<sup>th</sup>.

VII. **Old Business:**

**ArtsFest MONTANA 2021:** Joan reported that she emailed a draft sponsorship letter to Jason and Alison; it was noted that we need to decide what sponsors will receive as a benefit. Cameron noted that banners on the lifts will include their logos. Discussion followed on logos on murals and City sign code. Discussion followed on façade funds and painting; it was noted that our façade programs have been for permanent improvements. Cameron suggested a gathering of potential sponsors, rather than simply mailing them letters. Host an event and ask them for sponsorships, host an art show. Joan inquired about the practicality of fundraising for this August; Cameron felt it was practical. He noted that he needs to be able to line up artists; he's been talking with three nationally known artists as well as one in Bozeman. He noted his willingness to help, to come to town, to assist in an auction of prints, etc. He added that we can narrow the scope of work, so the budget is smaller. Sherrie reported that NWGF will commit to \$5,000 this year, as they did last year. Joan added that she is applying for the AARP Grant again, but we would not receive notification on that before June. Last year we received \$5,000 from AARP. Cameron suggested a print show held at Enbar or Speaking Socially, running prints from murals and auction them off. Max appointed Jason, Alison, and Karen to the ArtsFest Committee; Sherrie noted that Carol Bronson would love to serve on the committee as well. Cameron inquired about talking with Mayor Kelly; Joan noted that would be helpful.

**Beautification: Flowers:** Joan reported that she has informed Tillerias to not plant any flowers; if the Board chooses to do flowers and have them in place by the end of May they would need to be planted now.

**Downtown Great Falls Association:** Joan reported that Kellie is planning Craft Beer Week, tickets are available. They have updated their 2021 calendar; it's been released on our Facebook page.

**Downtown Office – Open House 5/20/21:** The Downtown office is hosting a Business After Hours with the Chamber on 5/20.

**Downtown Partnership: TIF Programs:** Joan reported that we go before the City Commission again during their Work Session on April 20<sup>th</sup>. We are hopeful that the programs are in a condition the City Commission will be pleased and will advise City staff to move forward toward implementation.

**TIF Application for Tree Work:** Joan reported that the TIF application for tree work goes to the City Commission on April 20<sup>th</sup>.

**Wayfinding:** Joan reported that the Wayfinding Plan was formally adopted by the City Commission on Tuesday evening, as well as the MOU with the DDP for implementation/ownership/maintenance once the signs are installed. The Montana Main Street grant was funded for \$12,500 for implementation.

**Downtown Safety Alliance:** Joan reported that the Safety Alliance continues to meet monthly. The committee, comprised of Carol Bronson, Suzie McIntyre, Sandy Rice and David Saslav, is working on writing the new Safety Plan as the most recent Safety Plan is dated 2013.

**Great Falls Development Authority:** Christian provided his report to the Board, it was sent to the Board via email. 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. He noted that they are currently working on 35 projects in their pipeline; ten of those projects they are actively working on, three new projects and four have opened and they've lost four. For BRE visits, they are currently tracking 129 businesses; they've reached out to 11, held 8 meetings and have four new clients. They are scheduling Barbara Wold one-on-one visits for businesses. Lead Generation is also known as Business Attraction, making sure that our spaces downtown stay full; they are currently targeting 56 businesses; they've reached out to ten and had a meeting with one. 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; and sharing client success stories. He added that they have Brownfields funds available. They just underwrote gap/bridge financing for a downtown project that was revealed this past Tuesday. They have a team member who is assisting bars and restaurants apply for their DUNS number, as this will be needed for the new COVID funds that are coming available. GFDA is commissioning a new housing study, the last one that was done was in 2019; they are partnering with NWGF and the Board of Realtors and are looking for more partners. Sherrie inquired when the housing study might be complete; Jolene noted that they are sending out the RFP and hope to be done with the study by June. Jolene added that GFDA has talent and added that they are starting a new series on retaining employees.

**National Heritage Area:** Joan noted that this item was added to the agenda so last month's presentation from Jane Weber could be discussed and whether the BID Board chooses to send a letter in support of the NHA. Max, Alison, and Jason all expressed concerns about the Board sending a letter of support and added that individuals that choose to support the NHA should send individual letters of support. Sherrie noted her support and appreciated the presentation last month.

**Parking Commission:** Joan reported that paying for parking went into effect April 2<sup>nd</sup>. The next meeting for Parking Commission is April 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Personnel:** Joan noted that we have had two other staff members who have worked seasonally and are ready to start working, but it will depend on where the Board lands regarding the budget.

**Work Plan – Draft FY 2022:** Joan presented the proposed Work Plan to the Board, noting that depending on how the budget falls the work plan will need to be adjusted accordingly, as well.

VIII. **New Business:** Joan reported that Monday through Wednesday next week is the National Main Street NOW conference, being held virtually. If anyone has any interest in watching any of it, it can be viewed in the Downtown office, or via the recordings afterwards.

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

X. **Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 9:55am.

Max Grebe, Chair

Joan Redeem, Staff

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