

**Business Improvement District**  
**318 Central Avenue**  
**Hybrid In-Person and via ZOOM**  
**Recording available via the City of Great Falls records request**  
**May 13, 2021**

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

- I. **Call to order & Roll Call:** Jason called the meeting to order at 9:03am; roll call of all present, a quorum was established.
- 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. Nominating Committee: Jason appointed Karen, Alison, and Sherrie to serve on the nominating committee to present a slate of officers for election in June, the term for those officers will be effective July 1. The officers are Chair, Vice-Chair and Treasurer. Joan informed the Board that Alison's term is due to expire on 6/30/2021 and she is eligible to serve an additional 4-year term. The City Commission requests that a recommendation be made. Commissioner Houck asked if the position has been advertised, noting that the Commission will ask. Alison asked that the City advertise and see if there is anyone else interested in serving; if there is no additional interest, she would be interested in serving an additional term.
- IV. **Approval of minutes from 4-8-21 Board meeting:** Max motioned to approve the meeting minutes from the 4/8/21 Board meeting, as presented. Neal seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.** Joan noted that she failed to include the meeting minutes from the April 22<sup>nd</sup> Work Session, those minutes will be on the June meeting agenda for approval.
- V. **Financials:**  
**Monthly Financials:** The Board received the March financials via e-mail. There being no further discussion on the financials, Max motioned to approve the 3/31/21 financial statements which include the Balance Sheet, P&L, and the P&L/Budget comparison. Sherrie seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**  
Joan provided dates to the Board of when documents are due to the City and when they will be presented to the City Commission. The final budget and work plan for FY 2022 are due to the City on June 11, 2021. The public hearing for approval of the budget and work plan will be sent on July 6<sup>th</sup> and the public hearing will be held on July 20<sup>th</sup>. August 3<sup>rd</sup> and September 21<sup>st</sup> are the meetings when the Commission will be setting the BID assessments.  
Budget vs Actual was presented to the Board, through May 12. It was noted that the final payment is being made this month to Madill Enterprises for the façade grant. It was also noted that some entities have already paid toward Wayfinding Implementation and therefore Special Projects reflects this. Great Falls Montana Tourism has paid \$5,000 toward Wayfinding, the Realtors Association has paid \$1,300 and GFDA has paid \$1,000. The DDP approved their contribution of \$6,500 but it will not be received until FY 2022.  
**Budget – Draft FY 2022:** Joan reported that she inquired with the City about the need to present a balanced budget. The City confirmed that a balanced budget must be presented. Lengthy discussion followed in regard to the proposed budget for FY 2022. A detailed review of all income and expense

followed. Joan provided a copy of Exhibit A for FY2021 to the Board; this is the spreadsheet the City provides annually that calculates the BID assessments. The assessments for FY 2022 will be set by the City Commission in September, as noted above. Based upon feedback the Board has received from various concerned community members, the Board provided some funding for beautification efforts, including flowers, ArtsFest, snow removal and holiday décor. In addition, they provided some funding for grants, support of the Downtown Business Development Officer and special projects. Kellie reported that the Board of DGFA is willing to provide what support they are able, they specifically expressed interest in offering assistance with procurement and planting of flowers. Discussion followed on the need to hire additional staff to water flowers. Joan noted that our agreement to support DGFA salaries was a three-year commitment signed in 2019 that expires June 30, 2022. She reported that office expenses will decrease, the landline is being transitioned to a cell phone so annual costs for internet and telephone service will be cut in half. Jolene shared the importance of the Downtown Business Development Officer position and the importance of the partnership with the BID to fund that position; what will happen if that position is not funded; the results of the position in the past year. The proposal Jolene will take to GFDA for consideration from the BID will be that the BID will provide up to \$35K for the salary and provide rent at no charge to GFDA. Joan noted the four pillars of the National Main Street program have been something our Downtown has been working towards for years; the Downtown Business Development Officer position fills the economic vitality pillar. She noted that the Downtown Association is the Marketing/Promotion pillar, and the BID is the Design pillar. Many organizations make up the Organization pillar. As an Accredited Main Street community, it is important that we have the four pillars working together on our downtown. Kellie noted the importance of having one office where individuals interested in downtown projects can get their questions answered/needs met; versus someone coming into our office and being sent elsewhere. Max noted that the feedback suggests that the Downtown Business Development Officer position needs to be a priority of the BID. Jason added that he would like clearly defined deliverables for the investment. Discussion followed on when and how to bring back BID grant programs; a timeline of this fall or next winter was discussed, depending upon the budget versus actual expenses at that time. Discussion on Donations; Sherrie noted that NWGF will cover the BID's Urban Art Project donation for FY 2022, Joan added that she wants to be sure the BID picks that donation back up once our in-kind contribution, acting as their fiscal agent ends. A final draft budget was proposed. The draft will be presented to the Board for formal approval at the June board meeting.

VI. **Grant Programs:** The grant schedule for FY 2021 was presented to the board. Current approved grants remaining to be paid out total \$226,910.

Discussion followed on the new TIF programs at the City, specifically the façade program. The Board discussed the two façade grants on the schedule that may be eligible for the new TIF programs. The Albrecht building and The Gibson Inn may be eligible to apply and if these two properties were awarded TIF funds for façade work the BID could adjust the grant schedule to reflect what funds those two properties receive from the TIF fund with anything necessary to offset. For example, Kellergeist has been approved for a \$62,500 façade grant with the BID and the City program would have a maximum of \$50,000 so the BID could supplement the difference of \$12,500. Max noted that based on the timing of the TIF programs going live the property owners may not be eligible if their construction has commenced.

Discussion followed on when and how the BID might be paying the grants on the schedule; it was noted that the BID has the right to pay out grants over whatever time period they need as all grants state that grants will be paid as funds are available.

Discussion followed on the definition of significant construction in regard to the length of time that some of the approved grants have been on the grant schedule. Jason asked that letters be sent to grant recipients with a deadline of significant construction commencing or the grants will be rescinded. It was noted that Kellergeist/Albrecht building grants are not due for an update until November 2021. The

Gibson project is due to receive a letter requesting an update on their interior grants in June 2021 and the façade grant in December 2021.

Joan reported that Big Sky Select responded to our letter requesting an update on their three grants; they have noted that they expect the project to be completed by June 1.

## VII. **Old Business:**

**ArtsFest MONTANA 2021:** Joan shared an idea to simplify ArtsFest and reduce the budget. She envisions bringing Cameron to town and he creates one to two murals; possibly present the workshop and utilizing many local artists we paint our trash enclosures in 1-2 days (each trash enclosure takes about one hour to paint; designs would need to be submitted and approved). Max expressed his concern over getting value from painting trash enclosures versus the value of painting murals. Discussion followed on the ArtsFest proposal from Cameron; Joan noted that she was who requested that Cameron provide a workshop as it is her hope to get more local artists trained, Cameron's proposal included a workshop at a cost of \$5K. Joan noted that based upon the final version of the budget agreed upon the BID would fund \$10K toward ArtsFest 2021, NWGF is providing \$5K, she will let Cameron know that we have a guarantee of \$15K but will continue to seek sponsorships so there could be additional funding. The ArtsFest committee is meeting regularly and working to figure out the event.

**Downtown Great Falls Association:** Kellie reported that their first event is this Saturday, they are hosting Brothel Tours; those tours are sold out. She noted that we are hosting our Downtown Office Open House on Thursday 5/20 in conjunction with the Chamber, it is a Business After hours event. The first Night Market is Friday May 21<sup>st</sup>. She is planning Craft Beer Week, June 7-12 with activities daily; tickets are available for the various events. They are seeking hole sponsors for the Golf Scramble that will be held Friday June 11<sup>th</sup>. The Montana Brew Fest is Saturday June 12<sup>th</sup>; they will have over 30 breweries attending, it will be held on Central Ave.

**Downtown Office – Open House 5/20/21:** The Downtown office is hosting a Business After Hours with the Chamber on 5/20. Joan asked that Board members stop in between the hours of 4pm to 6pm.

**Downtown Partnership: TIF Programs:** Joan reported that the programs were again presented at the City Commission work session in April and the Commission likes the current versions. The City is working on finalizing them and bringing them before the Commission for formal approval. These programs may go live as early as August.

**TIF Application for Tree Work:** Joan reported that the TIF application for tree work was approved by the City Commission on April 20<sup>th</sup>. She is working with the City Forrester to draft the bidding documents for that work.

**Wayfinding:** Joan reported that we were approved for a Montana Main Street grant for \$12,500 for wayfinding implementation; the BID was also approved for a grant from Montana Tourism for \$84,184. She noted additional commitments toward implementation; DDP has committed \$6,500, GF Tourism has committed \$5K, Realtors \$1,300 and GFDA committed \$1K. Several of these commitments have paid, as noted above. Joan met with the City and Cushing Terrell; Cushing Terrell is drafting the bidding documents. She asked that the BID be prepared to approve \$6,500 towards implementation in FY 2022. The BID is managing implementation for the entire plan.

**Downtown Safety Alliance:** Joan reported that the Safety Alliance last approved a Safety Plan in 2013. A draft Safety Plan is being reviewed by the Safety Alliance; once the Safety Alliance approves the Plan it will be presented to the DDP and Great Falls PD.

**Great Falls Development Authority:** Christian provided his report to the Board, it was sent to the Board via email prior to the meeting. The report is attached and made a part of these meeting minutes. Christian reported that he met with a site selector and they are making a second visit this weekend; he noted that with confidentiality he can't always share a lot of details but there is a great deal going on. He added that he can't take credit for everything, but he is working with a lot of projects. He reported that in spite of COVID in 2020 there were 14 new businesses that opened. Jolene noted that she is appreciative of the BID's support; meeting with Jason, Neal, and Joan monthly to get feedback and make sure they

are on target with their metrics. She asked that the Board look closely at the metrics that they are looking at, the four priorities listed on Christian's report each month.

**Parking Commission:** There was nothing new to report currently.

**Personnel:** Joan reported that she is working on taking a week of vacation this summer, she will be hosting a bike camp for individuals with special needs. Joan informed the Board that the office cell phone will be with her at all times. She added that she will be looking to hire an individual to water flowers.

**Work Plan – Draft FY 2022:** Joan presented the proposed Work Plan to the Board; adjustments were made to align with the budget. The final draft will be presented to the Board for formal adoption at the June Board meeting.

VIII. **New Business:** Joan reported that a volunteer crew will be doing a project downtown; she has asked that they re-paint the trash enclosure metal lids as they were last painted in 2012 and are in need. Joan reported that an electric scooter company is exploring coming to Great Falls; Mayor Kelly is hosting a meeting. Joan and Kellie have been asked to attend.

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

X. **Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 11:11 am.

Jason Kunz, Vice-Chair

Joan Redeen, Staff

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_