

Business Improvement District
318 Central Avenue
Hybrid In-Person and via ZOOM
Recording available via the City of Great Falls records request
September 9, 2021

Board Present: Jason Kunz, Neal Dubois
Board Present via Zoom: Trista Besich, Karen Reiff, Sherrie Arey
Board Absent: Alison Fried, Max Grebe
Staff Present: Joan Redeen
Guests: Brett Gaare, Kellie Pierce
Guests via Zoom: Christian Leinhauser

- I. **Call to order & Roll Call:** Jason called the meeting to order at 9:05am; 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.
- IV. **Approval of minutes from 8-12-21 Board meeting:** Karen motioned to approve the meeting minutes from the 8/12/21 Board meeting, as presented. Trista seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**
- V. **Financials:**
Audit: Brett Gaare, with Douglas Wilson, shared the draft of the audit for FY 2021; he noted that the audit went well, there were no findings. He pointed out that the cash almost stayed the same from FY 2020. He noted that prepaid expenses stayed about the same and includes prepaid insurance. He pointed out that accrued vacation is high, he recommended that employee contract be established as the most recent one is dated 2010; he'd like to see how much vacation can be carried over annually in an employee contract. He added that there remain over \$200K in grants to be paid out, yet the cash balance is fairly low. He suggested the Board keep the cash balance in mind if they are approving new grants. Trista noted that she reviewed the draft and had no questions, she noted it made a lot of sense to her due to the changes the Board made with grants. Trista moved to accept the audit, as presented. Karen seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.** Joan noted that FY 2022 audit will also be completed by Douglas Wilson, then the Board can decide if they wish to pursue bids again. She added that there are only a handful of auditors who are authorized to do the audit for the BID.

Neal Dubois arrived at 9:15am

Monthly Financials: The Board received the July financials via e-mail. There being no further discussion on the financials, Neal motioned to approve the 7/31/21 financial statements with the corrected dates which include the Balance Sheet, P&L, and the P&L/Budget comparison. Trista seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**

The City Commission will be approving the BID's assessment resolution on 9/21. Joan pointed out that the assessments are lower than budgeted, the BID budgeted \$253K for assessment income. The assessments are calculated at \$247,921.31; this was a decrease of \$5,165.62. She inquired with the City as to why and was informed this was a reevaluation year from the MT Department of Revenue and the value of the parcels within the BID decreased. The City has noted that the 192 parcels in the BID were valued at \$111.5M, down from \$114.5M.

The Board was presented the Budget versus Actual year to date report.

VI. **Grant Programs:** The grant schedule for FY 2022 was presented to the board. Current approved grants remaining to be paid out total \$226,910.

Joan reported that Big Sky Select has submitted all of their receipts, as requested by the Board. Their total grants payable is \$81,910. Discussion followed on cash flow, in regard to the Wayfinding project and grants payable. Joan recommended payments of \$10K per month and as Wayfinding wraps up and grant funding is received for that we could expedite their payments. Either way, their grants would be paid out in this fiscal year. Neal motioned to pay Big Sky Select Interior grant in September; Façade grant in October; and \$10K per month until paid in full for the Residential grant beginning November. Sherrie seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Joan reminded the Board that Albrecht and The Gibson received letters informing them to apply for the TIF programs with the City; there has been no response to those letters sent. There won't be a lot of discussion on the grant schedule next month, but Kellergeist's grants will be up for discussion in November.

VII. **Old Business:**

Beautification: Joan noted there is nothing to report at this time.

Downtown Great Falls Association: Joan reported that she emailed the Professional Services Agreement that the BID has with DGFA; this agreement was a 3-year agreement that launched in July 2019 and is due for renewal in July 2022. She noted that they are on a calendar year for their fiscal year, so the BID should decide if we are going to continue our support so they can set their budget for 2022. She added that she'd like to have the BID prepared to review a draft and approve in October. Jason, Neal, and Joan will work on this. Kellie reported they've wrapped up their summer stuff and are moving into fall preparations and Christmas Stroll. DGFA is helping to support the new event, the Big River Ruckus that will take place this weekend at Elks Riverside Park. In October they will be hosting Ghost Tours. Motoberfest is Saturday, 9/18, they are hosting the Fun Run while Mighty Mo hosts the Brew Fest. They are working on their budgeting process for 2022.

Downtown Partnership: Tree Work: Joan reported that the tree bidding document was sent out, the deadline is Wednesday 9/15. Max, Jason, and Joan will be opening bids at 12:30pm that day.

Wayfinding: The contract has been approved, MT Lines is signing it and then Jason will sign it on behalf of the BID, as authorized last month. A contractors meeting will be held soon. MT Lines anticipates having the project wrapped up before Thanksgiving. Joan noted that once the project is done, she can submit for reimbursement of the grants. She added that the City Commission will be reviewing the two TIF applications October 7th; there is a small \$6K application for West Bank Landing that the Planning Board approved and an application for \$118K from the Downtown TIF that the DDP approved. She noted that if the City Commission does not approve these applications, we will be changing the installation process of the Wayfinding signs. Joan noted that both applications request incremental payments, so we will be able to submit for reimbursement as the project progresses.

Downtown Safety Alliance: Joan reported that the new Safety Plan was presented to the Crime Task Force and to the City Commission. She added that the Crime Task Force sent out their recommendations for public comment; the Safety Alliance submitted their comments on the document. Joan encouraged everyone to submit comment on the recommendations if they wish to do so. Joan will email the document to the Board.

Trista Besich left the meeting 9:40am

Great Falls Development Authority: Christian provided his report to the Board, the report was provided 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 44 projects in their pipeline; 24 of those projects they have actively worked on in the last 30 days. They've added four new projects in the past month. He noted that he was able to set up a mentoring situation for a new entrepreneur. For BRE visits, they are currently tracking 368 businesses; they've met with nine in the past month. They

had ten scheduled but one cancelled, that meeting has been rescheduled. Christian noted that he increased the BRE list as he has a spreadsheet of every business that is located in the master plan boundaries. Lead Generation is also known as Business Attraction, making sure that our spaces downtown stay full; they are currently targeting 57 businesses; they've reached out to four and held two target meetings. Tools to drive investment, also content creation, include Invest Downtown. He noted that Invest Downtown 2021 is scheduled for October 28th from 10am to 12pm and is being held at The Newberry. This event will be offered in a hybrid mode. Registration for this is free and is open now. Last year there were 14 new businesses that opened downtown, and they plan to highlight that and the focus on the opportunities. They hope to schedule walk-thru's after the Invest Downtown event. He asked the BID Board for ideas for targets, people outside of our market that you think will do well in Downtown. Continuous activities include content creation, and sharing client success stories Brownfields assessments, clean-up funds and gap/bridge financing, the new TIF programs with the City. He noted that the response to these programs has been very good. He reminded everyone that if a large, catalyst project is moving forward downtown they are able to pursue TIF funds outside of the three new TIF programs. Christian shared that he is working on creating a formal proposal packet for Downtown that he can present to potential targets. He noted that GFDA has a packet for Great Falls, he is customizing a packet for Downtown. He added that since 2011 there has been over \$50M invested in buildings downtown. Joan noted that Neal had requested the monthly meetings with Jolene be started up again; Joan asked Christian to ask Jolene to touch base so that they can get something scheduled.

Parking Commission: Joan reported that PARK(ing) Day is scheduled for Friday, 9/17. It will be located at Pizazz on 4th Street, Tilleras is supporting this again.

Personnel: Joan reported that her family is preparing to move, but she has no plans to resign or retire. She will continue to work for the BID as long as it works for the BID Board and for her. She noted that she will be on the road from November until January and she plans to be back in Great Falls for the March 2022 Board meeting.

Work Plan – Draft FY 2022: Joan reported that the Work Plan will serve as the guide for creation of a new job description should the Board decide the new remote working format is not working.

VIII. **New Business:** There was no new business presented to the Board.

IX. **Public Comment:** There was no public comment at this time.

X. **Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 9:58am.

Jason Kunz, Chair

Joan Redeen, Staff

Date: _____

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