

Business Improvement District
318 Central Avenue
Hybrid - In-Person and via ZOOM
Recording available via the City of Great Falls records request
March 10, 2022

Board Present: Jason Kunz, Neal DuBois, Sherrie Arey, Michelle Bebbington, Max Grebe,
Alison Fried
Board Present via Zoom: Karen Reiff
Staff Present: Joan Redeen
Guests: Christian Leinhauser, Kellie Pierce

- 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/Public Comment:** 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. Joan reminded the Board of the attendance policy that allows board members to miss up to four meetings per year.
- IV. **Approval of minutes from 2-10-22 Board meeting:** Neal motioned to approve the meeting minutes from the 2/10/22 BID Board meeting, as presented. Max seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**
- V. **Financials: Budget FY2023:** Joan noted that we will be discussing this topic during our Work Session.

Sherrie Arey arrived for the Board meeting at 9:12am.

Monthly Financials: The Board received the November, December, January & February financials via e-mail. There being no further discussion on the financials, Max motioned to approve the 11/30/21, 12/31/21, 1/31/22 & 2/28/22 financial statements which include the Balance Sheet, P&L, and the P&L/Budget comparison. Alison seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Budget vs Actual was presented to the Board, through March 9.

Discussion followed on budget line items and what items are over budget; Rent and Travel & Education are the only line items over budget. The Board approved additional expense for snow removal.

New signature cards were signed by all board members present, updating the bank account with the addition of Michelle and removal of Sherrie as she serves as the Treasurer.

- VI. **Grant Programs:** The grant schedule was provided to the Board. The BID has paid out \$81,910 has been paid out in grants this fiscal year. Joan reported that the grants for the Great Northern Lofts project, paid to Big Sky Select have been paid in full. Grants remaining on the schedule total \$62,500 for The Gibson project. An update is due on The Gibson in July; the owner reported one month ago that construction would be starting in March 2022 and the project would be completed in Spring 2023.

VII. **Old Business:**

Beautification: ArtsFest: Joan reported that they are looking at hosting ArtsFest MONTANA 2022 August 12-19, this will be in conjunction with Big River Ruckus August 12 & 13 and the Russell Auction August 18-19. There will be an artist workshop held on Friday August 12th at NWGF. Sheila Rice has been creating a map of all the art located downtown. We will have some artists painting during Night Market's to demonstrate. We are actively soliciting for sponsorships of ArtsFest now; there will

be a mailing done. It was noted that sponsors should be submitted at least one month prior to launch of ArtsFest for those sponsors to be included in all recognition and press releases. Jason noted that we are working with the Chamber for additional mailing lists. Michelle inquired about a video that could be used for advertising; Jason noted that he can get video footage from Cameron. Christian inquired about any requirements for a property owner who wish to have a mural; Joan noted they need to contact her directly. Jason added that he and Joan met with Pacific Steel to solicit a sponsorship from them for ArtsFest.

Flowers: Joan inquired about if the Board wished to have flowers this summer, noting that personnel would be required, or we contract with a company to water them. In past budgets the BID has budgeted \$6,000 for Flowers and personnel was covered under Salaries. The Board recommended that Joan reach out to Tilleraas and get flowers planted and inquire about watering. It was noted that upon approval of the expansion we will need to add flowers in the 700 block.

Sound System: Joan noted that she came up with the following options: 1. Do nothing, maintain the status quo; 2. Purchase the Mobile Master Transmitter; 3. Sell advertising to anyone; 4. Sell advertising to DGFA Members only; 5. Let The Newberry sponsor and be the sole advertiser; 6. The Newberry take over for a fee and play the artists that will be coming to town for concerts; 7. Sell the entire system to The Newberry and let them run it. These options are not all inclusive, there are other options and some of these can be used in conjunction with others. She noted that the system was purchased in 2017 for over \$30K and consists of 12 speakers, one master transmitter, two repeaters and antennas. She added that two additional speakers should be ordered for the 700 block upon approval of expansion. An email has been sent inquiring about the cost of the new items if the Board were to choose to acquire them. She wondered if perhaps businesses on Central should be asked if they want advertising or just music. The Newberry did follow up on this topic recently, so they are still interested in pursuing something. Sherrie noted that she would like to see the BID purchase the Mobile Master Transmitter and the speakers for the 700 block of Central upon approval of the expansion. She added that she thinks a brief mention of various business sponsors during the music would be acceptable; she could see this being managed by The Newberry for a fee paid to the BID. She noted there is an opportunity without making this a radio station. Discussion followed on having The Newberry make a proposal to the BID.

Lighting of the Murals: Joan reported that she has been working on trying to figure out how to light the murals that have been installed during ArtsFest. There are ten building locations, currently. Every property owner has agreed to fund any additional bill for electricity that new lighting would create. The goal has been to get the lights installed at no cost to the property owner. She noted that to get the installation of the light fixtures installed she'd like to see the BID submit an exceptional TIF application to the City that would go through the City Commission, this would allow for lighting to be installed and not have costs associated with it for the installation for the property owners. Christian inquired about new murals going forward, Joan noted that this would be the solution for the current locations and a TIF application could be submitted every few years to cover the costs of installation. Discussion followed on the costs involved with installation, review of the one bid received was done. Discussion on photocell or motion detection lighting.

Downtown Great Falls Association: Kellie provided the 2022 Calendar to the Board. She reported that she is in planning season for summer fun. The St. Patricks' Day Parade is happening on 3/17, from Park Dr up to 8th. Craft Beer Week planning is in full swing; June 5-11 with the obstacle course, dinner pairings, trivia nights, golf scramble on 6/10 and the Brew Fest will be 6/11 on Central Ave in the 200 & 300 block. DGFA acquired a cargo trailer as the City has requested that they manage some of the street closures so they will have the barricades.

Downtown Partnership:

Wayfinding: Joan reported that Wayfinding continues to progress, the City and MDT have been out with MT Lines staking/marketing locations for the signage. Proofs for the motorist signs have been approved, directional arrows are being reviewed for the pedestrian signs and then proofs will be generated. They

will commence work on installation no later than April 15th and the task will take approximately two weeks.

Downtown Safety Alliance: Joan reported that the Downtown Safety Alliance meets on the first Tuesday of every month at 9am, next meeting is on 4/5. The history of the DSA was discussed, the Safety Alliance was originally created in 2009 by the BID. The original goals of the DSA were to support GFPD, advocate for a downtown officer and have downtown remain at the 'top of mind' in awareness for GFPD. Sherrie inquired who oversees the DSA; Joan noted that it is run by the BID. Discussion was held on whether the DSA serves a purpose; Joan noted that it continues to keep Downtown on the radar for GFPD. Joan noted that she has advised all members of the DSA that they are not able to attend meetings representing the DSA unless the DSA has authorized them to speak on its behalf. Discussion followed on the issues at the Methodist Church. She noted that GFPDA has been managing criminal issues, when they arise, at the United Methodist Church, but GFPD notes that the non-criminal issues fall to the City Commission to address. The Board noted that it comes down to property rights and individuals at the Church have the right to be there if the property owner is allowing them to be there, and the property owner is allowing them to be there. Joan asked the Board if the BID wished to take a specific stance on the topic as to how to address the issues at the Church, she added that it may be as simple as advising anyone who brings the subject to the Downtown office be advised to contact the City Commission.

Expansion: Joan reported that the BID expansion effort will go before the City Commission to set the public hearing on March 15th; Sherrie will be presenting, and Joan will be present on the phone to answer any questions the Commissioners may have. The City Commission will be holding the public hearing on April 19th.

Great Falls Development Authority: Christian updated the Board on his report; a copy of which was emailed to the Board with their meeting packet. He reported that a new restaurant opened in 600 Central Plaza; Hometana is going to open permanently; The Wild Hare will be opening, and Harvest Craft Kitchen will be running the kitchen in The Wild Hare. Christian met with Andy's Tap House that will be in The Commons, their Beer & Wine license was just approved. They hope to be opened in May. He reported that Sora & Company has closed, The Commons on Central may absorb that space. He has been meeting with a group about developing more residential downtown.

Karen Reiff departed the meeting at 10:25am.

Christian reported that for his BRE's this month he met with two businesses, he's been trying to connect with businesses that he hasn't been able to connect with in the past. Christian plans to start visiting with businesses block by block to reintroduce himself and inquire about what businesses do downtown businesses wish to see downtown. They have scheduled October 20, 10am to 12pm for Invest Downtown 2022. He added that Fire Within is being held on May 12th at Lifestyle Real Estate. Christian wrapped up letting the Board know that Jason Nitschke would like to present to the BID Board next month on Accelerate Great Falls. Christian will provide his monthly written report and let Jason present during the meeting. Christian will provide the handouts to the Board prior to the meeting.

Montana Downtown Conference: Joan reported that the Montana Downtown Conference will be held April 6-8 in Billings; she and Kellie and Christian all plan to attend. The conference runs from noon Wednesday to noon Friday. Joan inquired if the Board would agree to send Jason as he wishes to attend. The Board agreed that Jason should attend, and the BID would fund his attendance

Parking Commission: Joan reported that the Parking Commission is full and functioning well; they have been addressing some issues consumers have been having with the kiosks. They plan to get the press to assist in educating the community, but she noted that business owners downtown can also support educating in how to use the app and the kiosks. Kellie reported that if you have paid for parking for two hours on Central Ave and wish to move and pay for additional parking you must wait three minutes and then you are able to pay for an additional two hours of parking. Joan added that with the

kiosks an individual can pay for two hours and park in the 500 block and then move down to the 100 block all under one payment because payment with the kiosks is using the license plate. She reminded the Board that the two-hour time limit is still in place, so vehicles must be moved every two hours.

Personnel: There was nothing to report at this time.

Work Plan FY2023: Joan noted that we will be discussing this topic during our Work Session.

- VIII. **New Business:** Joan & Max reported about the Chamber's Low-Cost Airfare Initiative. Joan noted that the BID provided \$5,000 the last time the Chamber and the Airport Authority presented to the BID in 2020. Max did not remember the deadline for the SCASDI grant; Sherrie noted that NWGF donated \$5,000 by their March deadline. Joan noted that she can add this to the agenda for next month and the Board can decide about supporting it if the Board should choose to do so.

Max Grebe departed the meeting at 10:45am.

Joan reported to the Board that the National Main Street Conference is being held in Richmond VA May 15-18. She noted that Early Bird Registration ends March 15th and Jason would like to attend on behalf of the BID. The Board agreed to send Jason to the conference.

Joan reported that the Building Active Communities Initiative (BACI) has been the group responsible for painting the crosswalks on Central Ave in the past. She noted that this year they have not been given permission from the City to paint the crosswalks. She added that BACI has been given permission to paint alleys.

- IX. **Public Comment:** Christian reported that he will be serving guard duty for a few weeks this summer, there will be four weeks where he is out of the office Monday through Friday.

- X. **Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 10:49am.

Jason Kunz, Chair

Joan Redeen, Staff

Date: _____

Date: _____