

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

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

- 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:** There was no public comment at this time.
- III. **BID Board: Conflict of Interest:** Discussion followed in regard to the Alley Lighting Project; Jason Kunz, Alison Fried, and the Kathryn Building that houses the businesses where both Sherrie Arey and Max Grebe work are all a part of the project. It was noted that Sherrie and Max would have no personal financial gain. The Board noted that Jason and Alison would directly have a conflict, as was noted last month when action was taken for Neal DuBois to sign the Development Agreement between Jason Kunz and the City. There may be no further action taken on this project, it was simply noted there may be a conflict with these board members in regard to this specific project.
Board Paq Jason was going to explore Board Paq, but Joan has been sending a link to a google drive that has all necessary documents for each monthly Board meeting for the Board to access. It was noted that everything the Board receives is available to the public, so there were no concerns in regard to security with use of the google drive. The Board decided this method was working and Board Paq will not be pursued, at this time.
- IV. **Approval of minutes from 10-13-22 Board meeting:** Alison motioned to approve the meeting minutes from the 10/13/22 BID Board meeting, as presented. Neal seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**
- V. **Financials: Credit Card:** Kellie reported to the Board that she has a credit card with DGFA, and it is more convenient than a reloadable petty cash card that BID has been utilizing. The Board was receptive to this idea. Sherrie noted that there needs to be a general policy drafted on credit card usage, with spending limits, etc. for the Board to approve.

Karen Reiff joined the meeting at 9:09am.

Kellie reported that a reimbursement to the City for the tree work that Doctor Lawn has done, this reimbursement comes from the TIF fund.

Jason inquired if there is a maintenance program for the holiday lights that are on the trees. Kellie noted she had a conversation with Jonas, the vendor. There needs to be funding worked into next year's budget to cover additional lighting work. The budget of \$10K covers the installation of the holiday décor and nothing more. Discussion followed on brackets for the décor.

Monthly Financials: The Board received the October financials via e-mail. There being no further discussion on the financials, Neal motioned to approve the 10/31/22 financial statements which include the Balance Sheet, P&L, and the P&L/Budget comparison. Michelle seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**

VI. **BID Business:**

Beautification: Banners: Kellie reported that replacement of the brackets that hold the holiday décor are estimated to be about \$55 each, Paul Hogan at the welding shop at CMR High School provided that estimate. There is a need for four of these brackets for the 700 block in addition to some brackets that are in need of repair throughout the district.

She noted that there is a need for 12 new banners. Cat Graphics has provided an estimate of about \$100 each. They need to be ordered by December to be installed once the holiday décor is removed in January. Kellie added that in the past the BID has had sponsors who cover the cost of banners. The current sponsors are Great Falls Montana Tourism and Stockman Bank; the banners have been in place for many years with no promises made for length of time the banners would be in place. Kellie will inquire with the current sponsors if they wish to sponsor the new banners or seek a new sponsor if they are not able.

ArtsFest: Joan reported that ArtsFest MONTANA 2023 will be held from August 11-18, 2023. The Artist Reception will be held Wednesday, August 16th and the Artist Workshop will be held Friday, August 18th. She added that the reimbursement from the TIF for ArtsFest for \$45K was submitted to the DDP but has not been submitted from DDP to the City yet. She added that the \$5K down payment to Cameron for ArtsFest 2023, as called for in the contract that was approved last month, is being sent this month. Jason added that Cameron is booking artists. We are working to figure out costs for property owners in regard to prep, priming and sealant. He informed the Board that there is an issue with the mural at Lifestyles Real Estate. The property owners were informed before the mural was installed that the wall needed a great deal of prep, more than our budget and time frame would allow.

Alley Lighting Project: Joan reported that this project is progressing. Cushing Terrell is the project manager and they have engaged an Electrical Engineer. They will be reaching out to all of the property owners to check out the meters at each location. They will then be going out for public bid for an electrician for the work.

Sound System: Kellie reported that the new contact for the sound system is difficult to connect with. She has been informed that we are on a waiting list for the master mixer, otherwise she has heard nothing.

Trash Removal: Kellie reported that there has been no trash removal since 10/31. The bids received were as follows: Doctor Lawn, \$20K per year; Hudson's Trash Removal, \$50 per hour; we've been paying ServiceMaster \$25/hr. The other option is hiring an employee; she noted that a resume was received from a gentleman who worked for the BID in Saskatchewan. Kellie inquired with Restoration, Rainbow, and several other companies, they have not bid the work. Discussion followed on procedures with events; event organizers are responsible to remove trash after their events often with trash bags provided by the BID. Sherrie inquired if a month-to-month contract could be done to get through winter and see if an employee could then be hired, rather than getting locked into a long-term contract with a vendor. The Board recommended getting under contract with Hudson's Trash Removal at \$50 per hour for three (3) months at two days per week. Kellie noted that to do the entire district, emptying every trash can, was four hours of work for ServiceMaster. Joan shared that ServiceMaster also provided trash bags that the BID paid for.

Max Grebe joined the meeting at 9:37am.

Neal inquired about the average amount of hours that ServiceMaster provided service and noted that this information would be useful. Neal motioned that the Board approve Jason entering into an agreement for trash removal service up to \$50 per hour, consistent with our average hourly time that we've spent in the past. Sherrie seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**

City of Great Falls – ARPA Funds: Joe reported that the City Commission is meeting on November 17th for a special Work Session to review the applications that were submitted.

Downtown Great Falls Association: Kellie reported that they have Military Appreciation Days starting today through Saturday. Ladies Night is Thursday November 17th; they will have posters and brochures out next week. Parade of Lights is 11/26 and that is also Small Business Saturday. They have swag for Small Business Saturday to hand out. Christmas Stroll is 12/2. The buttons have been delivered to locations for selling. The final prize is a package that includes a soak at White Sulphur Hot Springs.

Downtown Partnership: Kellie reported that the DDP plans to submit two grant applications to the Montana Main Street program. They plan to submit an Impact Grant that will finish up the Wayfinding project with kiosks; the second grant is an economic transformation strategy that GFDA and NWGF will be working on. The DDP is also reviewing their Bylaws and making some minor edits.

Downtown TIF District: Kellie reported that the balance of the Downtown TIF remains at \$3.9M.

C-PACE Program: Kellie reported that she met with the City to discuss including the energy audit in the new TIF programs. The City has noted that if this is not specifically listed as an approved activity in the Downtown Urban Renewal Plan (DURP) the City would then need to do an amendment to the DURP. Kellie shared that there are several areas in the DURP where this program could be included but specifically the DURP notes, “establish a technical assistance and incentive program to encourage the adaptive re-use, rehab and preservation of historic buildings and sites”. This seems to fit what this program is working to accomplish. The City inquired if the recommendation from the BID is to simply cover the energy audits or cover the costs to do the improvements, as well. Kellie noted that the initial request of the BID is to simply cover the costs of the energy audit. Discussion followed on keeping any potential program fair and accessible to all eligible. Kellie noted that if this program were to come to be, it would take time as the program needs to be drafted and then presented to City Commission for approval. The Board agreed this proposed program is a way for property owners to improve their properties and this is a means to kick start interest in this program for all property owners. The Board discussed the BID funding the audits if the proposed TIF program wasn't approved or the BID submitting a special TIF application to the City to fund the audits. Joan mentioned that if the BID wished to submit a TIF application to the City, this would need to be an action item on a future agenda. She added that a TIF application or the City creating an additional program to the TIF programs will take some time; she shared that she believes the City should add this as a 4th program under the current TIF programs so that this program is accessible to property owners within the Downtown Urban Renewal District. Joan suggested that the BID draft the proposed program, as we did with the other three TIF programs, and submit that to the City for their consideration.

Main Street Grant – Wayfinding: Joan noted that Kellie reported on the two separate grant applications. The consensus among the DDP is to submit a Main Street Grant for the Wayfinding kiosks in order to complete implementation of the entire Wayfinding Plan. This grant would be managed by the BID, the BID would run the project, act as the fiscal agent, and submit for reimbursement of the grant funds once the project is completed as was done with the Wayfinding signage. Joan reported that this is the Impact Grant and the application is due November 30th. The Board needs to decide if they wish to manage this project on behalf of the DDP. She added that there is a 1:5 match requirement, the maximum grant is \$50K and that would require a match of \$10K. There were ten (10) suggested locations identified in the Plan for having a kiosk. She has sent emails to many of these identified locations inquiring if they'd be willing to provide any funding toward the grant. The Chamber, Ice Plex, Gibson Park, Siebel Park, Multi-Sports Complex, Civic Center, Montana Veteran's Memorial, the GF Airport, Visitor's Center, Montana Expo Park, and the University District are all identified locations. It was noted that this grant opportunity was not made public until after last month's board meeting; the option remains for the BID to not take the lead on this project and let DDP figure out the project. She went on to note that the BID contributed \$6,500 toward both the Wayfinding Plan and the implementation of the Plan. The City and the County have both been asked to contribute toward the match, as well. The Airport has noted that their funding can't be used for this type of project; the County has asked for a formal request of funding. It was noted that there may be two kiosks located within the BID boundaries. Discussion followed on what type of kiosks and where they'd be located; the Plan mentions static kiosks, pedestrian totems and

digital kiosks, as well. Discussion followed on advertising opportunities on the kiosks; digital would make that option very easy. Kellie is going to ask DGFA for some funding toward the match. The Board liked the idea of the digital kiosks, or a mix of both types of kiosks. Kellie reported that she had a conversation with City staff, they don't want the sidewalks cluttered. Joan noted that next month the Board will need to take action on, 1. Approving the BID taking the lead on the project; and 2. Whether or not the BID wishes to provide any funds toward the required match.

One-Way Conversions: Kellie reported that she met with City staff, they are on board with exploring conversion of one-way removals. The City's biggest concern is who is leading the project; she noted that the conclusion was that we have to start with educating the public and finding out if this is something that is even wanted. They will look to bring in some experts to hold some public panels to discuss the benefits; bring in community members from Billings or other communities that have already done this. They want to set up public surveys, etc., a means to include input from the entire community, not just downtown. It was emphasized that the one-ways in question are 5th & 6th Streets and 1st Ave South and 2nd Ave South, the entire length of the one-ways, not just downtown. Step one is to educate the public. Alison recommended the gentleman who spoke in Billings at the Montana Downtown Conference. She noted that he had discussed some grant programs for this purpose, as well.

Downtown Safety Alliance: Kellie reported that the DSA met in November. They've updated the Whom To Call List, the last time it was updated was 2018. Coins for a Cause boxes on Central Ave are in terrible shape; there are three left; Jason has several new boxes that need to be wrapped. Chief Newton and Captain Schaffer did attend the DSA; Officer Jacob Smith is still the BRIC Officer; they have six new officers in field training now. There should be more concentration downtown once those officers are fully trained. Michelle noted that the Church is starting to fill up again. Joe updated the Board on the FUMC. As a private citizen, he noted that the property was allowing tents and that was against City code. The City allowed it for some time, but over time they had to take action, and the tents were removed. The Church is private property and people can hang out unless the property owner says they don't want them there. It was noted that the recent fatality was due to alcoholism. The Church has agreed to post No Trespassing signs; those signs should be in place and GFPD will then be able to ask individuals to leave the property. The Church's mission will be to allow people in during specific times for help, for food, etc. but they will not allow them to hang out on the property.

Expansion: Christian reported that Jeremy Day, the owner of the Subaru dealer just got back to Great Falls recently. Joan shared the City has said the deadline is the first week of February for submission of the original, signed ballots; the timeline is up to the BID Board as long as all necessary tasks are completed. As long as the mailing has been done to all property owners and ballots are collected the Board can take formal action to proceed forward in December or even January.

Grant Programs: There were no grant applications.

Kellie reported that the second month's rent has been paid for Gracious Living Emporium, formerly Chrysalis for 112 1st Ave S.

Jason noted that the grant schedule needs to be updated for when The Gibson needs to provide their next update. An update was received immediately following the August Board meeting, the Board was informed in September, but the Grant Schedule was not updated. The Board noted that the Grant Schedule should be adjusted to reflect that updates are needed from The Gibson on the Interior Grant in February 2023 and on the Façade Grant in August 2023.

Great Falls Development Authority: Christian's report was provided to the Board via email. He reported that they haven't landed any new projects in the last month; projects are still progressing. He added that he has had four BRE visits in the past month. He shared that they are aggressively working on business attraction. He went to Bozeman and met with business developers there. He will be in Billings when the next BID Board meeting is being held; he'll be meeting with developers there. In regard to tools to drive investment Christian reported that Invest Downtown was held; they had nine speakers with over 120 people attending in person, and attendees online as well. He added that they debuted their new downtown video and it is available on their website. He will be contacting Seth Lutter

in regard to the C-PACE program to get an estimate for what an energy audit may cost. The MEDA Conference is being held in Great Falls next week, Monday to Wednesday; over 200 people are registered. Tash Wisemiller will be holding a discussion dinner at Enbar, the BID is sponsoring this dinner; he and Kellie are participating in this discussion. There are funds from the state available to assist small businesses with SSBCI. GFDA is working to replenish their Brownfields funds.

Parking Commission: Kellie reported that the BID needs to appoint an ex-officio representative to the PAC. She added that there have been no new applicants from either the DDP or the general public. The meeting scheduled for next week has been cancelled as they won't have a quorum. City staff has reported that there will be some revisions to the parking garages; the hours of operation will be 24/7 so those that park in the evenings will need to pay for parking; automated gates will be added to both garages. Citation payment is being shifted away from Planning & Community Development to the North Parking Garage. These changes will be presented to the City Commission during the Work Session on Tuesday 11/15. Alison motioned to table any action in regard to the appointment of a BID ex-officio member, until December. Sherrie seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Personnel: Jason reported that he has not made any headway on trying to get benefits for BID employees through the City. He added that Sherrie has been recommending that a policy be created for the Board to adopt. He noted that Joan had requested that her PTO be paid out, but he had tabled it as he was working with the City on benefits. Joan added that Sherrie had requested that a formal policy be created to reflect one of two things; 1. Either paid time off for just the BID Director, or 2. BID provide paid time off for all staff. She shared that, historically, the Director has been the sole employee to receive paid time off. The BID has used the City's employee handbook as it's guide for paid time off. The decision remains for the Board to decide if all staff receive paid time off or if just the Director receives paid time off. Sherrie's recommendation is to pay out the paid time off that exists now on the books for Joan and limit paid time off solely for the BID's Director. Sherrie motioned based upon her recommendation. Alison seconded. Discussion followed. The Board noted that Joan's paid time off on the books is to be paid out in one lump sum. Sherrie will draft a paid time off policy. **Motion passed unanimously.** This item will remain as an action item until a formal policy is presented, and adopted, for the paid time off for the BID Director position.

Streetscape: Kellie reported that she met with City staff, in regard to streetscape on 7th Street, off of Central Ave. City staff is supportive and recommending use of TIF funds; Joan inquired who will be the applicant for the TIF, City or BID. Kellie will follow up in regard to that. Jason noted that he is not sure all property owners on 7th Street will be in support of streetscape.

Work Plan FY2023: Kellie reported that she is working the Work Plan for FY 2023.

VII. **New Business:** There was no new business at this time.

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

IX. **Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 11:00am.

Jason Kunz, Chair

Kellie Pierce, Staff

Date: _____

Date: _____