

**Business Improvement District**  
**318 Central Avenue**  
**Hybrid - In-Person and via ZOOM**  
**Recording available via the City of Great Falls records request**  
**March 9, 2023**

Board Present: Jason Kunz, Neal DuBois, Karen Reiff, Michelle Houghton, Alison Fried  
Board Present via Zoom: Sherrie Arey  
Board Absent: Max Grebe  
Staff Present: Kellie Pierce  
Staff Present via Zoom: Joan Redeen  
Guests: Celeste Constancio, 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:** No board members expressed a conflict of interest with any item on the agenda, at this time.
- IV. **Approval of minutes from 2/9/23 Board meeting:** Neal motioned to approve the meeting minutes from the 2/9/23 Board meeting, as presented. Michelle seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**
- V. **Financials: Credit Card:** Kellie reported that DGFA does not have a formal written CC policy; Sherrie will work with Kellie to draft a policy for BID.  
**Budget:** Kellie will work with Sherrie to provide a draft budget for FY2024; Jason added that he is willing to assist.  
**Monthly Financials:** The Board received the January & February financials via e-mail. There being no further discussion on the financials, Neal motioned to approve the 1/31/23 & 2/28/23 financial statements which include the Balance Sheet, P&L, and the P&L/Budget comparison. Karen seconded.
- VI. **BID Business:**  
**Beautification: 1<sup>st</sup> Ave N Underpass:** Kellie reported that this will remain on the agenda so the Board can decide if they wish to pursue re-doing the mural. Jason inquired if a formal proposal has been received from Cameron; Joan noted that a proposal was received last fall.  
**ArtsFest:** Kellie reported that the ArtsFest committee has been meeting. Working on finding the walls for this year; an email was sent to specific property owners who were identified. Sponsorship letters were mailed out. Jason suggested a second mailing be done in a few months. Kellie shared that she's received some feedback from local restaurateurs that would like to provide some meals. Joe inquired about the life span of the murals and if they've been vandalized. Kellie noted life span will depend upon the condition of the wall but they are expected to last about 10 years. Sherrie noted that murals typically aren't vandalized.  
**Alley Lighting Project:** Joan reported that Tony with Cushing Terrell emailed that the engineer has visited every location and they are now setting up appointments with the property owners.  
**Sound System:** Kellie reported that she has reached out to some local contractors. Neal reported that Central Technologies will be willing to discuss the system.  
Jason inquired how much flowers cost annually; Joan noted that last year it was about \$7,400. Discussion followed on watering the flowers this summer. It was noted that Tilleraas should have the flowers planted now; Jason shared that he has someone interested in sponsoring flowers. Jason inquired about tree work; Joan noted that the TIF funds from the City were for five years and the contract is with Doctor Lawn. When those funds run out, the BID has the option of requesting additional TIF funds to

cover tree work. Michelle inquired about the tree in front of The Living Room; Kellie will let Doctor Lawn know.

**Downtown Great Falls Association:** Celeste reported they have their marketing campaign in place so everyone should be hearing those ads very soon. They have 12 new members this year. The first event will be the St. Patrick's Day parade on 3/17; Cruisin' the Drag on May 6<sup>th</sup>. Kellie noted that DGFA provides the vendors, as they have always done. Lithia is organizing the event. DGFA has taken over the management of the Mimosa Showdown and it is 5/13. Looking forward to summer events, Night Markets and Craft Beer Week.

**Downtown Partnership:** Downtown TIF District: Kellie reported that the TIF balance is approximately \$4.2M with quite a bit of already committed to projects. The DDP approved the recommended changes to the Life & Code Compliance TIF program, increasing the maximum amount of the grant from \$25K to \$75K; it will be presented to City Commission for their approval. Kellie added that the DDP has approved being the recommending body to the City for Parking. They are meeting with City staff to discuss how that will look. The City Commission will need to approve this change as well.

C-PACE Program: Kellie noted that Christian has been working on this and the ball is moving forward.

One-Way Conversions: Kellie reported that she needs to start moving forward and figuring out a game plan and what that will look like. She noted that it is just a matter of figuring out how the educational components will work and including the community. She inquired with Tourism is there were any conferences upcoming in Great Falls that could be partnered with to bring in an expert on one-way conversions; she is exploring partnerships of this nature.

Main Street Grant – Wayfinding: Kellie reported that the Main Street grant was approved, they have not been informed of the amount of the award. DGFA has committed \$2,500 toward the match; Tourism is asking for \$2,500; DDP has committed \$2,500 and the BID can fund the remaining \$2,500. Tourism did not receive their grant request for a kiosk. Joan noted that the Wayfinding Plan is what the City Commission has approved, ten locations were identified for kiosks in the Plan; Kellie can set up her committee to work on this using the Plan as their guide.

**Downtown Safety Alliance:** Kellie reported that the DSA met this week; there is a forum on March 14<sup>th</sup> at 7pm called Poison, it is a fentanyl awareness presentation at the library. April is No More Violence week April 5-11. There will be a CPTED presentation at the Chamber at noon on 4/12.

**Expansion:** Kellie reported that the City has received two letters of protest; one from the Masonic Temple and the other from Mr. Tune-Up. The public hearing is April 4<sup>th</sup> at the City Commission meeting. Alison suggested that someone reach out to the two property owners that have filed protests. Jason shared that he had a discussion with a board member of the Masonic Temple, and they have some specific questions; street lights are one of the things that the Temple would like to see installed in their block. Alison noted that the BID can advocate. Jason added they were also interested in snow removal.

**Grant Programs:** Kellie reported that an Interior Grant application has been received from Roe River Realty for 618 Central Ave; the Board received the application via email to review. Alison motioned to approve the application for an Interior Grant for the maximum of \$5,000 for Roe River Realty. Neal seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**

**Great Falls Development Authority:** Christian is serving military duty until mid-April; Jolene was unable to attend today in his place. Christian is working while on military duty. Kellie reported that the Fire Within awards will be held at the Haute Hive on April 20<sup>th</sup>; nominations are open.

**Lamp Post:** Kellie shared that she is leaving this on the agenda while the BID works through their budget process; the proposal was presented to the Board last month. She has discussed working with DGFA and possibly Tourism. The proposal ranged from \$8,500 to \$13K. Jason noted that the bid was more expensive than he thought it would be; he'd like the BID to explore this possibility with other companies. He was expecting the bid to come in closer to \$5K. Kellie noted just the murals was \$8,500.

**Montana Downtown Conference:** Kellie reported that the Montana Downtown Conference will be held October 18-20, 2023, here in Great Falls; from noon on Wednesday until noon on Friday. She has

been sharing sponsorship opportunities. She is looking at booking Jeff Siegler as the keynote speaker; the Department of Commerce will sponsor. Discussion followed on the size of the conference and who attends. The last time the conference was held in Great Falls was 2017.

**Parking Commission:** Jason inquired if the Parking Commission could be removed from the agenda; Kellie reported that the City Commission has not voted on the proposed changes yet. It can be moved up under DDP once the Commission approves the proposed changes.

**Personnel:** There was nothing new to report at this time.

**Streetscape:** Kellie reported that the City is working on plans and will be submitting a TIF application.

**Work Plan FY2023:** Kellie reported that she is working the Work Plan for FY 2023. A draft for the Work Plan FY2024 will be sent to the Board for discussion next month. It was noted that the Montana Downtown Conference; one-way conversions; streetscape conversion, etc. should all be reflected on the Work Plan for FY24; adding some items that are on the agenda but perhaps not on the current Work Plan.

- VII. **New Business:** Kellie reported that GFPS inquired about a 5<sup>th</sup> grade summer camp class that does a school wood project annually; they'd like to know if there is anything they can do downtown. They've constructed benches for the River's Edge Trail, etc. Discussion followed on planters for flowers, bird feeders, pedlets, etc.
- VIII. **Public Comment:** Joe shared an update on the Safety Levy. City Commission voted 5-0 to put a Safety Levy on the ballot in November; the last time the City approved a Safety Levy was 1969. He noted that in 1969 the City had 102 firefighters, now the City has about 70; the Police Department isn't much different. They are both working under skeleton crews due to lack of funding. Cost wise it means about \$150 for a \$100,000 house annually. The City voted 3-2 to contract with Wendt Advertising to conduct an educational campaign. The last attempt for a Safety Levy was 2009 and it failed. The library is seeking a levy that will be on a ballot sent to voters in June.
- IX. **Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 9:54am.

Jason Kunz, Chair

Kellie Pierce, Staff

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