

Business Improvement District
318 Central Avenue
Hybrid - In-Person and via ZOOM
Recording available via the City of Great Falls records request
March 14, 2024

Board Present: Jason Kunz, Neal DuBois, Sherrie Arey, Keith Cron, Erica Ferrin
Board Absent: Alison Fried, Max Grebe
Staff Present: Kellie Pierce
Guests Present: Christian Leinhauser, Joe McKenney

- I. **Call to order & Roll Call:** Jason called the meeting to order at 9:04am; 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:** There were no Board members with a conflict of interest with any items on the agenda at this time.
- IV. **Approval of minutes from 2/8/2024 Board meeting:** Neal motioned to approve the meeting minutes from the 2/8/2024 Board meeting, as presented. Keith seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**
- V. **Financials: Budget Amendments:** Kellie reported that the budget amendment was approved by the City Commission. The holiday décor has been ordered.
Budget FY 2025: Kellie reported it is time to start planning for FY 2025.
Monthly Financials: The Board received the December 2023, January & February 2024 financials via email. There being no further discussion on the financials, Sherrie motioned to approve the 12/31/23, 1/31/24 & 2/29/24 financial statements which include the Balance Sheet, P&L, and the P&L/Budget comparison. Neal seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**
- VI. **BID Business:**
Beautification:
1st Ave N Underpass: Kellie reported that Cameron will provide a new bid for a project outside of ArtsFest MONTANA. There have been some sponsors that have been visited with about funding; TIF funding could provide funding for one side due to the boundaries. Jason suggested that the TIF funding that has been allocated towards the alley lighting project be moved to fund the mural on the underpass. Sherrie noted that would likely have to go back to the City Commission as all property owners have signed an agreement with the City. The concern is the cost for lighting has proven to be higher than anticipated. The desire to have the alleys be safer with the benefits lighting can provide may be viewed as a more valuable use of TIF funding. New bids should be provided soon on the alley lighting project. Discussion followed on the possibility of pursuing federal funding through MDT or seeking funding from BNSF for the underpass mural.
ArtsFest: Kellie reported that a contract proposal was received from Sisters United to bring Indigenous artists to ArtsFest, the grant remains the same at \$6,000 per artist with \$2,000 to go the artists and the remaining to fund travel and expenses for the artists. Building locations continue to be sought. Kellie needs an editable version of the sponsorship flyer that Jason created. She shared that the property owner donates \$1,000 to the BID and funds the prep and priming of the building; the owner can do the work themselves or the BID can do it with the property owner paying for it. Costs vary depending upon the size of the building.
Alley Lighting Project: There was nothing additional to report on this item.
Trees: Kellie spoke to the City about utilizing TIF funds for tree lighting; the City was not against it.
Banners: Kellie reported that the Voyagers banners will go up mid-April and run through the end of June. The Voyagers will pay for the installation and takedown and fund the BID \$2,150, the agreement

is for two-years. She noted that she has informed United Way that they will need to order additional banners for the 800 block. Discussion followed on where banners are funded on the budget. The new banners are \$99 each and she has ordered ten (10) new banners for a total of \$990.

Holiday Décor: Kellie reported the holiday décor has been ordered. The items will be stored in the basement. She ordered 55 items.

Downtown Great Falls Association: Harley reported they are working on membership renewals; there is only a small number of businesses that haven't renewed and some new members. They are working on their marketing plan. She shared that she is still meeting the members. Mimosa Showdown is 5/18 and Craft Beer Week is 6/17 to 6/22. Kellie reported that the transition from Harley to Celeste is going well and has been good to have the two of them work together.

Downtown Partnership: Downtown Lighting: Christian reported that we may be moving toward focusing on a paid lighting study. Keith shared that he could get an initial estimate on a lighting study.

Downtown TIF District: Kellie reported that the TIF is still at about \$4.8M and continues to be healthy, no major TIF requests at this time.

Parking Commission: Kellie noted that the Parking Commission has six applicants to serve, and they'll be submitted to City Commission for a decision on whom to appoint.

Traffic Signal Box Art: Kellie shared that the DDP has \$2,500 budgeted to fund another box. She shared some locations that are all outside of the BID but within the master plan boundaries.

Wayfinding - Kiosks: Kellie reported that this is making progress; some modifications are being made to the vinyl. City Parks & Rec has approved to do one at the dog park since Expo Park declined to have one. They are looking at the Aim High Big Sky Center, as well. They have one sign that has been run over; MT Lines has requested that a different contractor be found to make the repairs and that the pallet of extra signs that MT Lines has been moved and stored elsewhere.

Downtown Safety Alliance: Kellie reported that the DSA meets the first Tuesday of the month at NWGF. Discussion has been held on harassment in the community.

Grant Programs: Kellie reported that there are no grants open or applications at this time. She shared that it is difficult to get people to know about these programs before they are starting any construction. Christian suggested that the language be reviewed so businesses could tap into the funding even if they've started the work. Discussion followed on getting notified of the permits from the City, so the BID is aware of any work that is planned in buildings downtown. Sherrie suggested reminding the building owners of the programs.

Great Falls Development Alliance: Christian recapped his BDO report and shared that the Fire Within event will be April 18, 2024, at Haute Hive. The Leiland Group visited town; he is working on a lot of follow-ups from those meetings. On target outreach he is looking for ideas for businesses that are in other communities that he can pursue to meet with. Kellie shared that the Leiland Group is doing a market analysis assessment of Downtown. Christian shared that when the Leiland Group is done, he'd like to do a large gathering to share the results. The funding sources for this program are from the TIF, a Montana Main Street grant, GFDA and NWGF. Kellie added that we are fully accredited, and this study will meet one of the requirements we have to maintain that accreditation.

Hello Lamp Post: Kellie reported that Hello Lamp Post is not willing to negotiate on the amount; DGFA also felt the costs were high. The \$8,470 would be split between BID and DGFA. Sherrie inquired about the usage; Kellie shared that the current one we have out is to promote our member businesses because we don't have any events right now. The St. Patricks' Day parade, Mimosa Showdown and Craft Beer Week will be added soon. She noted that all DGFA members are included, it is a benefit of membership. Sherrie noted that she saw no reason to use it once she scanned into it. Last year the BID funded \$11,000 with DGFA providing \$2,500 of the total. The Board inquired what the \$8,470 covers; Kellie noted we are into maintenance mode which would include adding events as they are held, adding new murals and information about the artists/murals. Hello Lamp Post offered a discount with the \$8,470 rate and has noted that rate is for one year, but they are willing to add three additional months. Kellie shared that we have had 106 users in the last 28 days, and they've only been

out for the last 30 days. The sidewalk stickers had to be removed as they became too slippery. Discussion following on putting them on the lamp posts, that can't be done without City permission. Discussion followed on how to market the program so consumers can be educated about the program and how to use it. There are separate QR Codes with programming for DGFA events and the BID murals. The Board discussed if there is enough traffic to afford the costs associated with it annually. Kellie shared that the DGFA Board felt it was high, but they were willing to fund their half if the BID is willing. The Board inquired about having staff from Hello Lamp Post meet with the Board; Kellie noted that they are London based so the timing is difficult. Kellie shared that DGFA should be supporting the marketing and education of the public about how to utilize Hello Lamp Post. Sherrie shared that she believes there needs to be a better plan before the Board approves paying for the service. The Board agreed that it needs to be promoted better. Sherrie added that with the Leiland Group doing the work they are doing what they will find is who is and who is not coming downtown; the goal with this program should be to invite our community downtown and to learn more about what there is to see and do downtown. Sherrie motioned to approve the next year's contract the total cost, split with DGFA (an expense of \$4,235 for the BID) and add up to \$500 to the BID costs for promotion, sign needs and other things to get this program off of the ground. With a report on the plan of how the funds will be used and the rollout of the plan at the next month's board meeting. Neal seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**

National Main Street Conference: Kellie reported that the conference will be held in Birmingham, AL May 6-8. Registrations have been made for eight (8) people from Great Falls; DDP authorized expenses for up to four (4) individuals to attend. Sara with the City and Troy with NC#7 are attending for the first time; Emma with NWGF is attending. Alison and Jason are attending.

Personnel: Kellie reported that she used the prior job description for the Community Ambassador and added some additional job duties that include flower watering, trash removal, if needed, and other duties as assigned. The position is being advertised at \$14.50 per hour for up to 20 hours per week with more hours in the summer months.

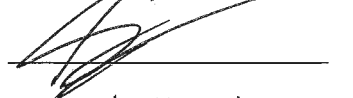
Work Plan FY2025: Kellie reported that it is time to review the work plan for FY 2025. Amendments were made to the FY 2024 Work Plan and were approved by City Commission with the budget amendments.

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

VIII. **Public Comment:** Christian reported that he is not deploying; he will be attending the National Main Street conference.

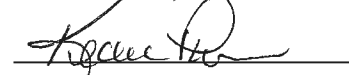
IX. **Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 10:19

Jason Kuntz, Chair



Date: 4-11-24

Kellie Pietce, Staff



Date: 4/11/24