

**Business Improvement District**  
**318 Central Avenue**  
**Recording available via the City of Great Falls records request**  
**July 11, 2024**

Board Present: Neal DuBois, Alison Fried, Erica Ferrin  
Board Present via Zoom: Sherrie Arey  
Board Absent: Jason Kunz, Keith Cron  
Staff Present: Kellie Pierce  
Guests Present: Jake Clark, Jolene Schalper

- I. **Call to order & Roll Call:** Neal called the meeting to order at 9:10am; 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. Board Election of Officers: Kellie reported that the Board will need to elect their officers at the August meeting, with the City Commission filling the openings on the Board next week the BID will have a full board to conduct the election.  
Openings: Kellie reported that there are currently three spots on the Board to fill. Sherrie Arey and Erica Ferrin's terms have expired, and they have both expressed interest in continuing to serve. She shared that two applications have been received, one is from architect, Cara Carlson and the second from downtown developer Garry Hackett. Sherrie noted that both applicants are very qualified and either would be an asset for the BID Board. Alison motioned to recommend that Sherrie Arey and Erica Ferrin be re-appointed to serve and that the BID Board recommend the City Commission appoint the architect, Cara Carlson, to the Board to continue having an architect serve on the BID Board. Sherrie seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**
- IV. **Approval of minutes from 6/13/2024 Board meeting:** Alison motioned to approve the meeting minutes from the 6/13/2024 Board meeting, as presented. Erica seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**
- V. **Financials:** Budget FY 2025: Kellie reported that the budget will be presented to the City Commission for approval on July 16.  
Monthly Financials: Kellie reported that these financials are the end of the fiscal year; we are missing reimbursement from DGFA for salaries as well as TIF reimbursement for tree work that has been done. Those deposits will be reflected in FY 2025. The Board received the June 2024 financials via email. There being no further discussion on the financials, Alison motioned to approve the 6/30/24 financial statements which include the Balance Sheet and Profit & Loss. Erica seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**
- VI. **BID Business:**  
**Beautification:**  
1<sup>st</sup> Ave N Underpass: Kellie reported that Spark Architecture will do a 3D image of the entire underpass. MDT has updated the lighting. Jolene shared that MDT wishes to make this an area that is safe and willing to work on lighting, if needed.  
ArtsFest: Kellie reported that they will have 8-9 artists and walls are being assigned. The Airbnb and the hotels have been secured; she is working on donations of meals. Sherrie noted that NWGF will cover one of the meals. Kellie noted that Tracy's is providing dinner and Street Burgers is providing lunch. Kellie added that ArtsFest is being held August 17-24; she noted that both Jason and Alison will not be

in town for all or portions of the week, she will need additional Board members to offer support. Alison shared that they are working to determine if they will host the Artist Reception. She added that Cameron will not be teaching this year.

Alley Lighting Project: Kellie reported that the project is moving forward, awaiting word from lighting distributors.

Banners: Kellie reported that it is July, and the Paris Gibson month banners should be up, she'll be checking with Cat Graphics to find out the status. She will be emailing the company about the free banners that were supposed to be provided to them.

Holiday Décor: Kellie reported that the new décor has arrived, there are 55 new snowflakes. A light party will be held in October to be sure all of the lights are in place and working. Jolene inquired about decorating the City's Christmas tree, she will reach out to the City as Kellie noted they are responsible for decorating the tree while DGFA is responsible for acquiring it and getting it put into place.

**Downtown Great Falls Association:** Harley reported that Craft Beer Week has wrapped up; Night Market is next week. BACI will be activating the space at 4<sup>th</sup> & Central during the Night Market. She will be working on making posts about Coins for a Cause and Gift Certificates. The Sidewalk Sale is coming 7/27, there will be some doing a 3-day sale from 7/25 to 7/27. She created an event on Facebook for ArtsFest MONTANA. She is working on creating reels as they do very well. Jolene inquired about having the Night Market in the 100 & 200 block.

**Downtown Partnership:** Downtown Lighting Study: Jolene reported that they are working to find a consultant to conduct the lighting study. Nicki is reaching out to the National Main Street office as well as other communities that have their downtowns well lit. She shared that they are back in the research mode to be sure they are doing this correctly.

Jolene reported on the Downtown Market Assessment. The consultant that they hired was not doing what they said they would do, so they are working with the consultant to ensure that they complete the report and do what they were hired to do. She noted that they want the data to be first and the recommendations to come from the data, so the consultant is working toward that. They will also be in town in September. She shared her excitement about the cell phone data that is being collected; after large events, they know how many attendees are downtown and where they go after the event. Sherrie noted that NWGF was invested in this project and would like to have the housing data.

Downtown TIF District: Kellie reported that no major projects have been presented; the City is working on some applications before they present them to the DDP for review and recommendation. The Big Dipper did submit and was approved by the City under the programs the City has authority to approve.

Parking Commission: Kellie reported that the Commission is full, and things are working well. The free parking in the North parking garage has been received well, parking is up 57% this summer. The contract with Sp+ is on a month-to-month basis now; a presentation was done last month about potential upgrades to our antiquated systems. The cost structures presented make it feasible. The Commission is considering making some upgrades based upon this presentation. She added that it was good to have some history presented to the new Commission members.

Traffic Signal Box Art: Kellie shared that artwork on two TSBs will be installed next week.

Wayfinding - Kiosks: Kellie reported that she is waiting on the City to create an MOU, the kiosks will be located in the City parks, so they need to have confirmation of who is maintaining them.

**Downtown Safety Alliance:** Kellie reported that there was no July meeting due to the holiday. Public restrooms have been the big topic. The City is willing to be a partner in figuring this out. Neal requested that it be added to the agenda so it can be discussed and figured out.

**Expansion:** Kellie reported that this has not moved forward and should be picked up again after ArtsFest MONTANA.

**Grant Programs:** Kellie reported that she has edited the Business Incentive Grant Application to read, "within 60 days of a lease being signed." The remaining criteria are still the same, it is simply adjusting the time that applicants have to submit an application. Sherrie motioned to approve the changes to the Business Incentive Grant application. Alison seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**

**Great Falls Development Alliance:** Jake reported that there are 13 downtown projects that are active in their system; the Station apartments are pre-leased, and they are not having a problem filling their spaces. Discussion followed on the need for housing. Jake added that Nicki has 368 businesses on her list for BRE visits, they are working to prioritize that list. He requested that the BID Board assist Nicki in making connections and meeting property, business owners and developers downtown. Jolene shared about the idea of a universal/uniform method for available properties for property owners to tap into. They are working on creating an inventory database, as well. Jake added that the Tools to Drive investment include SSBCI, another batch of funding has been released that is available to veteran, tribal or rural owned businesses. Jolene shared that \$22.9 M has been invested in Downtown and the riverfront in the past year; their goal is to have that number increased this year. She added that they have more Brownfields clean-up funds available.

**Hello Lamp Post:** Kellie reported that a final version of their sign is due. The mural information has been updated and will be available before ArtsFest MONTANA.

**Personnel:** Kellie shared that Wes is doing a great job on the flowers.

VII. **Work Plan FY2025:** Kellie shared the FY 2025 Work Plan will be presented to the City Commission for approval on July 16.

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

IX. **Public Comment:** Jake noted that the BID should keep up the good work!  
Alison inquired about the status of the Rocky Mountain building. Kellie reported that the building is for sale. The tunnel on the front of the building will not be removed until it is secured. It is understood that Alluvion won't have any funding to secure the building before May 2026, at the earliest. Discussion followed on if the property owner's downtown will be ok waiting with the eyesore remaining. Jolene shared that GFDA has run numbers on this building, and it is challenging to make the project work. Sherrie noted that we need to be a voice for the property owners downtown. Kellie shared about a project they heard about at the National Main Street Conference, she has forwarded the information to Greg Doyon at the City and will forward it to Sherrie and Jolene to review.

X. **Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 10:06am.

Neal DuBois, Vice-Chair

Date: 8-8-2024

Kellie Pierce, Staff

Date: 8-8-24