

**JOURNAL OF GENERAL DISCUSSION MEETING OF THE GREAT FALLS CITY  
COMMISSION AND U.S. SENATOR JON TESTER  
CIVIC CENTER, GIBSON ROOM**

**FEBRUARY 4, 2011  
8:50 a.m.**

**PRESENT:** City Commissioners: Michael J. Winters, Robert Jones, Bill Bronson and Fred Burow. U.S. Senator Jon Tester and staff: Robyn Madison, Cheryl Ulmer and Dayna Swanson.

Also present were Deputy City Manager Jennifer Reichelt, Fiscal Services Director Melissa Kinzler, and City Clerk Lisa Kunz.

Mayor Winters complimented Senator Tester for his stand on Veterans' benefits. Senator Tester commented that he visits Montana soldiers in the military hospital every time he receives notification. The parties discussed the importance of taking care of veterans up front. There are a lot of places to cut the budget, but not when we are bringing troops home. Mayor Winters noted that he is promoting a military museum in Great Falls.

Senator Tester discussed the importance of the FAA and Highway bills. He also noted that there needs to be a concerted effort to get the budget under control. There will be some programs that will get cut. However, he realizes the importance of not cutting programs that would force local governments to raise property taxes. He encouraged the Commissioners to contact his field director, Cheryl Ulmer, if they have concerns about program cuts.

Infrastructure is critically important to create economic growth. If programs are working well, such as the CDBG program, he encouraged the Commissioners to let him know that as well, and he will work to keep them.

Senator Tester discussed the process that changed for earmarks in 2002. Now, priorities are posted on-line and a name has to be attached to it. The downside is that the Department of Administration now determines where the money is going to be spent.

Senator Tester suggested that the Great Falls Development Authority request an appropriation again for the Agri-Tech Park.

In response to Commissioner Burow's inquiry regarding the status of the Corps of Engineers certifying the levees, Senator Tester noted that he is working with several others to get that fixed.

Commissioner Jones noted the importance of the military missions in Great Falls. Senator Tester expressed his opposition to the removal of the F15's from Great Falls to Fresno, and the detrimental effect it will have. Commissioner Bronson discussed, and Senator Tester concurred, the importance of the City of Great Falls, Central Montana Defense Alliance, or other segments of the community participating as one voice so as not to send mixed messages.

## ADJOURN

There being no further discussion, Mayor Winters adjourned the informal, general discussion meeting of February 4, 2011, at 9:30 a.m.