

JOURNAL OF COMMISSION WORK SESSION
September 15, 2009

City Commission Work Session

Mayor Stebbins presiding

CALL TO ORDER: 5:45 p.m.

ROLL CALL: City Commissioners present: Dona Stebbins, Bill Bronson, John Rosenbaum, Bill Beecher and Mary Jolley. Also present were the City Manager, Assistant City Manager, Acting City Attorney, Directors of Community Development, Fiscal Services, Park and Recreation, Public Works, the Acting Library Director, Police Chief, Fire Chief and the City Clerk.

1. INTEROPERABILITY OF EMERGENCY RADIOS

Police Chief Cloyd Grove explained that a switchover to an interoperability system will improve public safety radio coverage, including areas not covered by cellular phones; allow all public safety radio users to share voice and data over a seamless network; and, expand communication abilities with other jurisdictions. Chief Grove introduced Kevin Bruski, Executive Director of Interoperability Montana.

Mr. Bruski stated that the presentation would include background information regarding what the project is about, some history and where the project is headed. The presentation will be followed by a discussion of how the Commission sees Interoperability Montana sustaining this project.

Ian Marquand, Public Affairs Officer, provided a PowerPoint presentation. He defined “interoperability” as the ability of one system to use the components of another system. What that means is that there will be links between systems instead of barriers. Interoperability Montana is a locally made project, driven by volunteers for public safety with the ultimate goal of saving lives and, down the road, saving money in the public sector. This project is a federal priority because of Homeland Security interests and general public safety, as well as a state priority.

Interoperability will bring better local radio coverage to the public safety disciplines. It will allow those disciplines to talk across county lines or any other artificial barrier that is on the map. Mutual aid should be enhanced. It will make Montana connected and compatible. There are currently nine consortia in the state.

Interoperability Montana was created as a non-profit, inter-local association of these consortia, consisting of counties and the sovereign Indian nations. Up to this point, everyone has been a volunteer. Last year, Interoperability Montana hired its first permanent staff working full-time on this project.

The mission for Montana is to have a state-wide, state-of-the-art interoperable system for both public safety voice communications and data transmission. The plan is to have the system complete by 2014. Within the mission is a vision of a seamless communication system that

brings together the local disciplines – police, fire, sheriff, EMS, and disaster personnel; as well as linking communities and counties, tribal governments, state and federal agencies, and be linked with other states and Canada, as well as private entities like hospitals and ambulance services.

The first demonstration project was in Helena, and Lewis and Clark County controls the trunking system. The Northern Tier system is running in test mode. Mr. Marquand stated that the hope of Interoperability Montana is to have all tier projects turned on by the end of the year.

Up to this point, federal funding and grants have paid for construction. Mr. Marquand discussed where the money was spent, and asking congress for help. The question after the system is complete is how to sustain and maintain the system. In January, 2009, a sustainability plan was drafted that includes federal, state and local participation. In conclusion, Mr. Marquand discussed user memberships to pay dues on the system. He suggested that new revenue sources could be tourists, motorists and traffic violators.

Commissioner Beecher inquired the degree of progress in other states and was informed that Wyoming's system is 85% complete, and South Dakota is up and running.

Commissioner Bronson inquired about microwave issues and was informed there were no issues in the Great Falls area.

Commissioner Jolley inquired about the dotted line in the center of the map and was informed that was how the microwave design team routed the sites.

2. MILL LEVY PROCESS

Budget Officer Melissa Kinzler provided a PowerPoint presentation explaining the FY 2010 annual tax levy process. The total increase in mill levy due to newly taxable property increased from \$112,656 in 2002, to \$1,026,130 in 2010. The inflationary factor increase for 2010 is 1.112%. The mills exempt from § 15-10-420, MCA, are the voter approved GO Soccer Park debt, GO Swimming Pool debt and permissive medical levy. The total mills for the FY 2010 annual tax levy are:

147.70 General Purpose Mill (General Fund)
14.21 Permissive Medical Levy (General Fund)
2.12 GO Soccer Park Debt (Fund 363)
5.01 GO Swimming Pool Debt (Fund 364)
169.04

Ms. Kinzler further explained that after calculation of the levy, the process is for the Commission to pass a resolution, the resolution is certified at the Cascade County Clerk and Recorder's Office, and then the County Treasurer applies the mills to property taxes.

She concluded with an example from the FY 2009 annual tax levy, and explained that the levy calculation does not include street assessments, boulevard assessments, special improvement district or lighting districts.

ADJOURN

There being no further discussion, Mayor Stebbins adjourned the work session of September 15, 2009, at 6:47 p.m.