

JOURNAL OF CITY COMMISSION WORK SESSION
September 17, 2019

City Commission Work Session
Civic Center, Gibson Room 212

Mayor Kelly presiding

CALL TO ORDER: 5:30 p.m.

CITY COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: Bob Kelly, Bill Bronson, Tracy Houck, Owen Robinson, and Mary Sheehy Moe.

STAFF PRESENT: Deputy City Manager Chuck Anderson; Assistant City Attorney Joe Cik; Finance Director Melissa Kinzler; Library Director Susie McIntyre; Park and Recreation Director Steve Herrig; Police Chief Dave Bowen; and, Deputy City Clerk Darcy Dea.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

1. LIBRARY STRATEGIC PLANNING UPDATE.

Library Director Susie McIntyre reviewed and discussed the attached PowerPoint presentation covering mission, guiding principles, data gathering, needs assessments, value of the space of the library, community values, open to all versus safety concerns, infrastructure needs, technology needs, access needs, services, process, steps already started, and strategic plan.

Commissioner Moe requested Library Director McIntyre to provide the Commission with the Library Benchmark Report.

Library Director McIntyre reported that library staff provides individual technology training to citizens, and noted that handouts and online videos are also available as a resource. Non-profit community groups can sign up on a first come, first served basis to rent the Community Room in the basement of the library. Homeschool parents are an identified group that can utilize library resources and programs. The library receives approximately \$6,000 a year from parking at the library. In response to inquiries, Library Director McIntyre commented that she utilizes resources from other library directors throughout the state. Library Director McIntyre expressed concern about the morale issue at the library.

Referring to the morale issue, Commissioner Moe responded that making public employees feel valued is important.

Library Director McIntyre clarified that Tracy Cook with the Montana State Library assisted the Great Falls Public Library develop the Strategic Plan, that Commissioner Owen Robinson is an Ex-officio Library Board member, and that the Booter program is no longer available to the library.

Mayor Kelly commented some libraries utilize Community Service Workers to escort citizens to and from the library at night.

Mayor Kelly mentioned that the Commission could assist with facilitating meetings between the Great Falls Public Library and the Great Falls College MSU to help librarians put resources together. Mayor Kelly requested that Library Director McIntyre notify the Great Falls Rescue Mission Cameron Family Center about the hours of operation during the winter. Mayor Kelly commented that the Commission is available to help in any way with regard to the morale issue at the library.

Commissioner Bronson commented that the Commission will assist the library with improving the services that the library provides; however, he expressed concern with regard to the Commission micromanaging the library. Commissioner Bronson noted that the Community Room is a good resource for non-profit organizations to utilize.

Library Director McIntyre responded that it is not her intent to have the Commission micromanage; however, she commented that the Commission is a major stakeholder.

Commissioner Houck expressed support of the services at the library, and commended the Library Board of Trustees for its role with regard to executing the Strategic Plan.

Referring to the Library's Benchmark Report, Commissioner Moe commented that the Great Falls Public Library ranked lowest in all categories. Library Director McIntyre responded that the Library Benchmark Report was two years old.

2. PARK MAINTENANCE DISTRICT UPDATE.

Park and Recreation Director Steve Herrig provided a handout and discussed the attached Park District Year One, Two, and Three Projects and September, 2019 Park District Year One Re-Allocation of Funds.

In response to inquiries, Director Herrig clarified that the Park Advisory Board has reviewed the Park District Year One Re-Allocation of Funds Projects, that Grande Vista Park is not located in a Low to Moderate Income (LMI) area, and is not eligible for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, and the weed issue at the parks is due to a combination of the weather and a lack of employees to maintain them.

Park and Recreation Director Herrig explained that some components of the Grande Vista Play Structure would be Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant. He mentioned that the status of Park and Recreation projects are available on the City's website.

Commissioner Houck commented that the Montana School for the Deaf and Blind is recruiting for lifeguards at the Mustang Pool.

Commissioner Moe mentioned that Senate Bill No. 24 deals with funding for state parks and allows communities to avail themselves of money for trails and outdoor recreation facilities. She noted that she is pleased that the parks are becoming more ADA accessible.

Mayor Kelly reiterated that the Park Maintenance District was put on the ballot for creating the district, and that the assessments would be determined yearly.

DISCUSSION OF POTENTIAL UPCOMING WORK SESSION TOPICS

Deputy City Manager Chuck Anderson reported that the October 1st work session will consist of updates on the Animal Shelter, the Development Review Process, as well as a Water Tower Logo RFP discussion. The Montana Expo Park Project will be a topic at the October 15th work session, as well as an update from Neighborhood Council #6.

Mayor Kelly commented that Citizens for Clean Energy would like to present a Sustainability Plan at a work session in November.

The Commission suggested that updates from the Malmstrom Air Force Base/National Guard, the Airport Authority Board, as well as an Emergency Planning update be added to an upcoming work session topic list.

ADJOURN

There being no further discussion, Mayor Kelly adjourned the informal work session of September 17, 2019 at 6:25 p.m.

Great Falls Public Library Strategic Planning 2019

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Our Mission:

The Great Falls Public Library serves as a **connection point**; we **empower the community** and **enhance the quality of life** by providing individuals access to information and social, cultural, and recreational resources.

Our Guiding Principles

- **RESPECT:** The library is built on a foundation of mutual respect between patrons and staff. Our staff prides themselves on clear, honest, and knowledgeable communication at all levels. Courtesy and open communications are highly valued and contribute to the positive experience of visiting the library.
- **OPEN ACCESS:** The library is committed to providing all patrons with free and open access to ideas, information, materials, and programs. We develop services, programs and balanced collections that attempt to fully represent the needs and interests of our diverse community. We connect patrons to what they want in a friendly, nonjudgmental manner.
- **CUSTOMER FOCUS:** You are welcome here! The library values community members and is responsive to their needs. The ideas and opinions of patrons are vital in determining how library projects and services move forward. Impact on patrons is a primary concern in making any and all decisions.

Our Guiding Principles

- **GROWTH AND INNOVATION:** Promoting ongoing learning and continuous innovation are of great importance to the library. We work hard to respond to present situations and anticipate the future needs of our patrons. We are committed to remaining an important and relevant institution by evolving and expanding to better serve our community.
- **EXCELLENT STEWARDSHIP:** The library acts as a trusted steward of community resources. We are responsible for appropriate use of public funds and make every effort to fully utilize the strengths of our talented staff. We make the best use of our resources to deliver the highest level of library service to our community.

At the end of the Strategic Planning Process we will:

- **KNOWLEDGE:** Have an understanding of how GFPL can serve our community & meet priority community needs
- **BEHAVIOR:** Deploy staff and resources in a focused way to meet priority community needs
- **ATTITUDE:** Have improved staff morale because we have a roadmap and the resources to get there
- **STATUS:** Have improved standing with City, Commissioners and Public because we have an improved communication tool.

DATA GATHERING

- **Staff generated:**
 - Library Site Assessment
 - List of Current Programs/Services
 - Strengths|Weaknesses|Opportunities|Threats analysis
 - County Map of Library Services
 - Report benchmarking GFPL vs Big 6 Montana Libraries

DATA GATHERING

- **Standards of Services**
 - Montana Public Library Standards
 - Montana Library Commission Excellent Library Service Award (ELSA) checklist
- **Demographic Report on Great Falls Community**

Needs Assessments

- **Information from other agencies**
- **Information from National Library Reports/Research**
- **Community Survey**
- **Stakeholder Surveys**

What we learned: OVERALL LIBRARY

- Most users rate our services highly
- A high percentage of respondents indicated that they either didn't use or weren't aware of many of our services.
- Many people value the Library as a symbol of community values.
- Overall 91% of respondents rated the Library as EXCELLENT or GOOD.

“I value the availability of print and digital resources, technology, friendly supportive staff and most of all the physical space of the library. Every community is reflected in its library. If you want a prominent, educated community you must have a library to support that.”

What we learned: SPACES

- Many people value the space of the Library to study or read or feel part of the community.
- **82%** of patrons surveyed rate **Library spaces (seating, atmosphere, building...)** as **EXCELLENT** or **GOOD**.

“I enjoy the calm atmosphere that allows for reading, reflection and just relaxing. I don't always go there for a book, sometimes I bring my own just to have a quiet, yet friendly place to be.”

What we learned: COMMUNITY

- Many people value the Library as a symbol of community values.
- Many people value the role of the Library in promoting community.

“It's a community resource open to everyone!”

“One of the most important parts of our community”

“Its availability to the public”

“It belongs to the people”

“Even though I don't use a lot of the services, they are important for the COMMUNITY.”

What we learned: OPENNESS VS SAFETY

- Some people have concerns about the **safety** of downtown and certain types of “other patrons.”
- Others highly value that the Library is a **space for everyone**.

Open to All versus Safety Concerns

“I’ve also **chosen to NOT stop at the library** and try again later, when driving up and seeing a variety of characters hanging out in front. **I don’t feel safe** parking and getting out of my car.”

I value... “That the front desk staff are warm and make the space friendly and accessible to all. I appreciate the value & patience they show to the children, elderly, and homeless in particular. **I appreciate how our library is a safe, accepting space.**”

What we learned: FACILITIES

- Patrons do NOT like paying for **PARKING**.
- The Library has some important **facility/infrastructure needs**.
 - New AIR Handler (currently have contract to be replaced)
 - Basement Flooding issues (working on scope/cost estimates)
 - New roof
 - New Bookmobile

What we learned: TECHNOLOGY

- The Library has some important **technology needs**.
 - Upgrade network switches (seeking funding from Foundation)
 - Upgrade Library inventory system to streamline repetitive tasks and enable deployment of staff to direct patron service
 - Maintain computer upgrade schedule (seeking continued funding from Foundation)
 - Install security cameras (seeking funding from Foundation)

What we learned: ACCESS

- Patrons value the Library and our services.
- Patrons want the Library to be **open more hours**.
- **Great Falls Public Library is open fewer hours** than other comparable Libraries in the state.
- **Great Falls Public Library has fewer staff** than other comparable Libraries in the state.

The Library could improve ...

“More hours open.” “More customer hours”

“Longer hours.” “Be open on Mondays!”

“I would like to see it open more often. I know money is a problem but I believe it is closed ... on Mondays??? Let’s please try to have it open 7 days a week.”

What we learned: SERVICES

- Patron value access to **BOOKS** and materials—both online and in print.
- Patrons want access to more materials with less wait times.

I value...

“Being able to check out books to read instead of having to buy them.”

“Access to wide variety of books and ebooks for adults and children.”

The Library could improve ...

“Increase books and amount of new books released.”

“More licensed ebooks, especially the popular & most requested.”

“More available copies of current books.”

What we learned: SERVICES

- People love our children’s programing.
- People appreciate the art and adult programming.
- People appreciate access to computers/wifi...
- People value our friendly staff
- People want the Library to be more visible in the community.
- People want easier access to information about what is happening at the Library.

What we learned: PROCESS

- We mostly got information from people who already are connected to the Library.
- We need to find ways to connect with people who don’t use the Library and find out what they need.

STEPS ALREADY STARTED

- Starting October 7th, opening on Mondays for 6 hours/day all year (versus 4 hours/day on Sundays for 32 weeks/year)
- Started process to join the Montana Shared Catalog and Partners to provide better access to materials from libraries across Montana

Next Steps: STRATEGIC PLAN

- Presentations to Key Stakeholder Groups for feedback
- Analyze the input
- Create the Strategic Plan
 - Board = Goals/Timelines
 - Staff = Objectives/Strategies to meet the objectives
- Share the Strategic Plan with the community
- Implement the Plan

Do you have any questions?

Input from you:

- What is your vision of the role of the Library in our community?
- As we make our strategic plan, what would you like us to keep in mind?