

JOURNAL OF COMMISSION WORK SESSION
March 4, 2008

City Commission Work Session

Mayor Dona Stebbins presiding

CALL TO ORDER: 5:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL: City Commissioners present: Mayor Stebbins, Bill Beecher, John Rosenbaum, Bill Bronson and Mary Jolley. Also present were the Interim City Manager, Directors of Community Development, Fiscal, Library, Park and Recreation, Planning and Public Works, the Fire Marshal, Police Chief, and the City Clerk.

1. MONTANAPBS PRESENTATION

Kerry Callahan Bronson, Chair of Friends of MontanaPBS, advised the Commission that MontanaPBS is attempting to raise funds for the construction of a digital transmitter to serve Great Falls and surrounding areas.

Lisa Titus, Development Director, and Eric Hyyppa, General Manager, provided an overview of MontanaPBS. They explained that MontanaPBS began in 1984 in Bozeman and became statewide in 2000. The transmitter will broadcast in digital and will provide a free over the air signal accessed by antenna to the 85,000 people in the coverage area. MontanaPBS is Montana's only public television service and is comprised of two stations, KUSM, licensed to MSU in Bozeman and KUFM, licensed to the U of M in Missoula. The construction permit has been approved and the FCC has allocated channel 21. The goal is to raise \$1.2 million to construct the transmitter. A grant in the amount of \$500,000 has already been requested. They explained that the remaining amount will be raised via other grant applications and private fundraising. Ms. Titus said that it is likely they will need matching funds and she estimated that amount to be between \$200,000 – \$400,000.

Commissioner Bronson asked what the estimated date was for the construction to be completed, and he was informed within two years.

Commissioner Beecher recommended the program documentary be included as part of their fund raising efforts. The premise was to cover class C girls' basketball that turned into a story about small town America.

2. RECYCLING CENTER

Public Works Director Jim Rearden presented a PowerPoint slideshow and provided information about the existing City Recycling Center facility. He also discussed different scenarios for making a decision to purchase another property. Mr. Rearden explained that the existing facility started as a transfer station and expanded over the years to a

recycling center. The facility is currently operating in the red. Mr. Rearden explained the pros and cons of taking in the recyclables and other items at the facility. He stated that the goal would be to eliminate financial losses at the recycling center, reduce volume of waste land filled, and to possibly consolidate City functions such as yard waste, compost and sludge disposal that are currently at three separate City facilities.

Mr. Rearden discussed a 20 acre parcel of land proposed for the new facility and the cost breakdown. The intent would be to annex the property and add a water main and roadway. The next steps are to exercise the option to purchase the property by May 15th, further analyze transfer/recycling options, consider long term recycling funding options and consider the sale option and timing on the existing property. In conclusion, Mr. Rearden stated there are options, opportunities and challenges to consider.

Commissioner Jolley asked if the facility operates in the red now, is it too early to estimate what the new facility will net. Mr. Rearden responded that it has operated at a deficit of \$100,000 to \$140,000 for the past three years. The recycling portion of the facility is what costs the most. Patrons are charged a fee for the transfer portion of the facility and it will pay for itself.

Mayor Stebbins asked how heavily the re-use-it area is used. Mr. Rearden answered that it is pretty active.

Commissioner Beecher asked if there was a way to ease recycling issues by encouraging the local community to separate the recyclables as done in bigger cities. Mr. Rearden responded that the recycling business is very labor intensive. Commissioner Beecher requested that Mr. Rearden pursue information on costs and programs that other cities are doing.

Commissioner Bronson asked what other cities have been checked into. Mr. Rearden said that Calgary's operation was very interesting.

Mayor Stebbins stated that she has purchased and used the eco-compost from Missoula and wondered if Missoula would have an interest in buying additional compost.

Commissioner Rosenbaum inquired if an appraisal had been done on the existing property. Mr. Rearden responded that it had been done, but it has not gone out for bids yet. Building at the new facility will depend on what components are decided on and the City will need to hire a consultant.

Commissioner Jolley said people in town don't think about the recycling center. If more information went out to the public, more people would hear about it.

ADJOURN

There being no further discussion, Mayor Stebbins adjourned the work session of March 4, 2008, at 6:15 p.m.