

**JOURNAL OF COMMISSION WORK SESSION**  
**February 19, 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 City Manager, Assistant City Manager, Directors of Community Development, Library, Park and Recreation, Planning and Public Works, the Fire Marshal, Police Chief, City Attorney and the City Clerk.

**1. LIBRARY UPDATE**

Library Director Jim Heckel presented a PowerPoint slide show regarding recent changes at the Great Falls Public Library. Included in the updates were the public internet equipment and improved privacy stations; microfilm reader/printer; space for young adults; gallery and exhibition space; replaced carpet; computer upgrades; and, major reconstruction of the front plaza. Mr. Heckel explained that this funding of approximately \$300,000 was non-local tax money. The funding came from donations, grants, volunteers, and a bequest from Walter and Lucille Elliot.

Mr. Heckel discussed the new books and babies program. He stated he has a great staff and credited Nola Huey for creating several programs for kids of different ages. He also informed the Commission that the Cascade County Historical Society archives moved out of the library after 15 years. This resulted in the loss of rent monies, as well as a staffing issue in the Montana Room. That room is now being staffed by volunteers 30-35 hours per week. He also discussed several new programs coming up, including the Can We Talk? Conference on civil discourse, perspectives on the Middle East, Piano Jack, computer classes, CANstruction, Great Falls Festival of the Book, and tax help.

Mr. Heckel reported that the Great Falls Public Library Foundation currently has \$2.2 million dollars. The book-a-thon raised \$33,000 this year, and \$400,000 over the past 13 years. The Foundation has returned \$1.5 - \$2 million over the years to the library.

Mr. Heckel also discussed the reconstruction of the front plaza. He showed the initial plans and drawings for an aquatic stone arch being constructed out of 20 tons of stone.

Mr. Heckel concluded with issues that face the library, the PPL settlement, the Montana Room, and how to use the space left vacant by the Montana Historical Society archives.

## **2. INTERNATIONAL FIRE CODE**

Fire Marshal Doug Bennyhoff presented a PowerPoint slide show and explained why the International Fire Code (IFC) should be adopted. Mr. Bennyhoff stated that the Western Fire Chiefs Association, comprised of 10 western states, has adopted the International Building Code (IBC), and eight of the 10 states have also adopted the IFC. Mr. Bennyhoff explained that each municipality is required to adopt a fire code. Each municipality reserves the authority to adopt codes to fit their needs as long as they meet or exceed state standards. Great Falls is currently interpreting fire codes using the 2003 NFPA1/Uniform Fire Code. However, the NFPA1 is not a companion code to the IBC.

Mr. Bennyhoff stated that by adopting the IFC, the fire department, as well as the community, will benefit. By using the IFC as a companion code to the IBC, the fire department will be able to provide higher quality service with greater efficiency, and man hours will be saved. The building officials support this request to adopt the IFC.

Commissioner Jolley asked if building projects going on now would have to be brought up to speed after the code adoption. Mr. Bennyhoff answered that code enforcement would be pursuant to the year the building occurred. Commissioner Jolley asked what the cost would be that he mentioned. Mr. Bennyhoff responded that the price of the code book is \$68 that every architect company would have to purchase. He further stated that from the date of adoption until the effective date 30 days later, industry may choose to have plans and premises reviewed under either the NFPA1 or the 2006 IFC. During that 30 day period, use of the IFC will be recommended.

Mayor Stebbins inquired how many cities in Montana have adopted the IFC. Mr. Bennyhoff said Billings, Kalispell and Lewistown have adopted the IFC, and Helena and Missoula are considering it.

Commissioner Beecher asked what reluctance would a city have not to adopt this code. Mr. Bennyhoff explained that the western chief is paid to promote the NFPA1.

## **ADJOURN**

There being no further discussion, Mayor Stebbins adjourned the work session of February 19, 2008, at 6:17 p.m.