

**JOURNAL OF SPECIAL CITY COMMISSION WORK SESSION MEETING**  
**Fire Training Center, 1900 9<sup>th</sup> Street South, Great Falls, MT**  
**January 27, 2020**

City Commission Retreat

**City Commission members present:** Bob Kelly, Tracy Houck, Mary Sheehy Moe, Owen Robinson, and Rick Tryon

**Staff present:** City Manager Greg Doyon, Deputy City Manager Chuck Anderson, and City Clerk Lisa Kunz

**Facilitator:** Mark Willmarth, Training/Development Coordinator

Lunch at Fire Training Center – 12:30 p.m.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Facilitator Willmarth called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

**1. FACILITATED SESSION WITH MARK WILLMARTH ON COMMISSION PRIORITIES FOR 2020**

Training and Development Coordinator Mark Willmarth provided an overview of the retreat proceedings. Commission members will each have an opportunity to discuss what is important to them. The primary objective of this planning session is for the Commission to come up with three to five collective priorities. City Manager Greg Doyon communicates the Commission’s priorities to the department heads so they can plan accordingly in preparing their upcoming budgets.

City Manager Greg Doyon cautioned the Commission about obtaining majority support before embarking on a policy initiative and committing staff resources.

He also discussed his communication style and how he disperses information to Commission members individually or, when he feels it needs to go to everyone, then collectively. The Commission agreed that he provides the Commission with the right information to make informed decisions. When the Commission commits to a decision, he encouraged them to stick with it to see if it is effective, or to change it if it hasn’t proven effective, and to appreciate citizen concerns, but that it’s okay to say “no the focus is on this right now.”

Manager Doyon reviewed and discussed the attached “Year in Review – Very Brief Highlights (Calendar Year 2019)” and “On the Horizon (Calendar Year 2020 and Beyond).”

Break 2:08 – 2:15 p.m.

A discussion followed about department head responses to the pre-commission retreat survey. A common theme was clear direction from the Commission, where they want to see the community going, and what the Commission wants them to focus on.

The following general observations were also made:

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- Public expectations about why Great Falls hasn't grown is not realistic
- Prior Commission did not come up with initiatives that they could collectively support and did not work cohesively as a team
- Provide a long term vision and clear direction to staff
- Public safety – community involvement inclusive of the schools, Benefis, military, airport, GFDA, and Chamber of Commerce – concerns overlapping across departments
- Decontamination of fire gear, exposure to hazardous materials, danger to employees
- DRB recommendation, conflict between staff and City Manager recommendation
- Court – funding was set aside for a second judge. What is the status?
- Planning and Community Development workload - parking

Requests were made to separate facility/equipment requests from staff requests with regard to public safety, and that Judge Bolstad provide an update on the status of hiring a second judge.

Facilitator Willmarth requested that each member of the Commission now take turns providing their individual perspectives, and each provide three to five priorities. The purpose of which is to see if there is commonality.

Commissioner Tryon commented that it's not necessarily his agenda, but what he is hearing:

- Continue to create jobs and a business friendly environment in Great Falls  
Why: Grow Great Falls, grow tax base
- Address crime issue – adding more police vs City government's role in mental health and homelessness issues  
Why: Quality of life
- Continue to build a transparent City government and respond to what the community wants  
Why: Address reasons why people are so negative

Commissioner Houck:

- Address the crime issue  
Why: Make the community better and safer for the greater good
- Climate and energy resiliency – long term capacity  
Why: Capital improvements and energy efficiencies
- IT – ability and resources to respond (software, cyber security, staff)  
Why: Governs everything
- Capital needs  
Why: What can we afford, prioritize, and pay for
- Livability

Commissioner Moe commented that Great Falls is at a crossroads. She is hearing things such as "I'm ready to move (never thought I'd say it), and why do you put yourselves down so much."

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- Broadening the circle to shape the future of Great Falls - reach out to other entities, share resources  
Why: We can't do this alone – it's a community issue
- Crime (community issue)  
Why: Personnel impacts, understaffed Police Department, impacts everything we do
- Great Falls position itself as a 21<sup>st</sup> century town – doesn't need to cost a lot to be a large effort, energy, recycling, livability index  
Why: Positions us to grow and could save us money
- Self-Education (Commission attend continuing professional education)  
Why: Opportunity to see what other communities are doing

Commissioner Robinson:

- Reduce City's cost of employee medical expenses; work towards a plan for next CBA negotiations  
Why: Better allocate resources (employees now pay 10%; suggested 10%-20% over a four year period)
- Public Safety – Employee Safety (camera use in facilities)  
Why: Welfare of employees
- Development process (great progress, but complete process with merger/reorg; take parking out of development)  
Why: Better for developers; therefore, better for community
- Plan for Civic Center façade  
Why: We have to sell it

Mayor Kelly:

- Crime - quality of life, addiction, mental health & drug use  
Why: Crosses every department and community
- Become a 21<sup>st</sup> century town (opioid addition, climate change, become more sustainable, data driven)  
Why: Too important – economic and social impact
- Extend invitations to many people/groups to get them involved/outreach – collective discussion/participate in community discussion  
Why: Need everyone's input
- Civic Center – Create a plan for how we are going to address it & address financing for capital project  
Why: We recognized the problem, but haven't done anything about it

Brief discussions followed about:

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- Development review. It was noted that decisions are made based on ordinances that the City Commission adopted, and that Billings has a more formalized mechanism, a development process advisory review board; and
- 21<sup>st</sup> Century town – what does that mean? It was noted that Citizens for Clean Energy discussed an energy proposal, and that reference to “climate change” is too broad and too political.

Facilitator Willmarth commented that it is important for the Commission to set forth realistic stepping stones for this year so that departments know where the City Commission wants their time and energy focused.

Facilitator Willmarth reviewed the items of commonality that could be collectively focused on:

- Finish the development review process
- Civic Center façade – identify timeline and vehicle for financing
- Crime – be transparent and proactive – conversation with community and move into where do we go from here
- Energy conservation/efficiency – discussion on what the City can and cannot do

Based on lack of time, Facilitator Willmarth asked that each Commission member write a statement of where they want the City to be in three to five years, define why, and then what the Commission should be working on for the next 12 to 18 months, and he will coordinate setting up a follow up meeting.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

**ADJOURN**

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the informal special Commission Work Session of January 27, 2020, at 4:36 p.m.

# City Commission Retreat

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## Year in Review – Very Brief Highlights (Calendar Year 2019)

- **Public Library**
  - Strategic Plan Completion
  - HVAC Replacement
  - Boiler Replacement
  - Monday openings
  - Basement flooding
- **Fire Rescue**
  - Paramedic Class (reached goal of 21)
  - Firefighter Jason Baker passing
  - Initiated Community Risk Reduction Plan
- **Parks and Recreation**
  - Private Golf Management
  - Mustang Pool Agreement
  - Gibson Park entrance completion
  - Various PMD#1 projected completed; Move to year 2 projects
- **Public Works**
  - Water line crossing project - Missouri and Sun River
  - New Water Treatment Process online
  - Gore Hill Water Tower
  - 100 Block of chip seal
  - Addressing HAA5 water treatment
  - DEQ Stormwater Permitting
  - Warm storage equipment barn fire and replacement
- **Planning and Community Development**
  - Full staff
  - Development Process updates
    - New landscape/parking standards – increased flexibility
    - Software integration
    - Community Development Engineers
  - PMD – Electric City Water Park Bathhouse

- **Police**
  - 911 Dispatch Software change
  - Police Radio Testing and study
  - Active shooter training- CCSO and GFFR
  - Recruitment/retention challenges
  - # Officer involved shootings
- **City Manager (including DCM and Divisions)**
  - Office redesign
  - Appointment of Housing Authority Director and Library Director
  - All Collective Bargaining Contracts Negotiated
    - Affinity with GFFR
  - Charter Franchise Agreement negotiation
  - City 190 Camera/Mic system
  - Cattery Construction
  - Addition of Communication Specialist
  - Information Technology
    - Significant Software Changes – IT, P&CD, Finance
    - Telephone conversion
    - Cyber Security
- **Legal**
  - General civil/criminal caseload
  - Involved with numerous code changes, successful litigation, risk management
  - Court Coordination
- **Finance**
  - Completed critical budget, CAFR and audit processes
  - Implementing new fund accounting software
  - Key positions in Finance to be filled
- **Housing Authority**
  - Housing Authority over \$1 million in capital
  - New director, new board, new internal promotions
- **Human Resources**
  - Updating dated policies, practices, procedures
  - Implementing HRIS

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### On the Horizon (Calendar Year 2020 and beyond)

#### **Community**

- Response to Development Review Changes
  - Shifting conversation from City at fault to community deterrents and market force education
- Soil Policy for residential construction
- Ensuring a solid foundation for potential growth
- Potential GBSD Impact
- River Development
- TIF Requests
- Building on Downtown redevelopment (transportation, parking, use of TIF)
- Animal Services (RFP due Feb 24)
- Perceptions about Public Safety

#### **Organization**

- Department Head Retirements
- Wage compression
- Drug Testing Policy – Court Action
- 911 Radio/Dispatch System hardware/software
- Transition of payroll to HR
- Communication Specialist – role, responsibilities
- Public Works
  - Stormwater requirements
  - City Engineer recruitment
- Aquatics sustainability – Mustang Pool
  - Facility plan for future
- Fire station sewer repair/replacement

#### **Finance Highlights**

- Calumet Appeal
- Parking Management Proposal
- Engineering Fund – Fees
- Golf Fund – Expecting results
- Swimming Plan B for Mustang
- Civic Center – External repairs; internal repairs

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