

JOURNAL OF COMMISSION PROCEEDINGS
April 21, 2020

Regular City Commission Meeting

Mayor Kelly presiding

CALL TO ORDER: 7:00 PM

Gibson Room 212

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL/STAFF INTRODUCTIONS: City Commission members participated electronically via Zoom: Bob Kelly, Tracy Houck, Mary Sheehy Moe, Owen Robinson and Rick Tryon. Present were the City Manager Greg Doyon and Deputy City Manager Chuck Anderson, City Clerk Lisa Kunz and Deputy City Clerk Darcy Dea; Fire Chief Steve Hester; Assistant Fire Chief Jeremy Jones; Planning and Community Development Director Craig Raymond; Public Works Environmental Division Manager Paul Skubinna; City Attorney Sara Sexe; and, Police Captain Jeff Newton.

Due to the COVID-19 health concerns, the format of the City Commission meeting is being conducted in a virtual video-conferencing environment. In order to honor the Right of Participation and the Right to Know (Article II, Sections 8 and 9 of the Montana Constitution), public participation is welcomed and encouraged as follows:

- Attend in person. Refrain from attending in person if you are not feeling well. The City will require social distancing at the meeting, and may limit the number of persons in the Gibson Room according to applicable health guidelines.
- Provide public comments via email. Comments may be sent via email before 5:00 PM on Tuesday, April 21, 2020, to: commission@greatfallsmt.net. Include the agenda item or agenda item number in the subject line, and include the name and address of the commenter. Written communication received by that time will be shared with the City Commission and appropriate City staff for consideration during the agenda item and before final vote on the matter; and will be so noted in the official record of the meeting.
- Call-in. The public may call in during specific public comment periods at [406-761-4786](tel:406-761-4786). All callers will be in a queued system and are asked to remain on hold and be patient. Calls will be taken in the order in which they are received. Callers will be restricted to customary time limits. We ask for your patience in the event there are technical difficulties.

AGENDA APPROVAL: There were no proposed changes to the agenda by the City Manager or City Commission. The agenda was approved as presented.

CONFLICT DISCLOSURE/EX PARTE COMMUNICATIONS: None.

PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS/NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCILS/BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

1. MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.

Donna Williams, 2916 2nd Avenue North, submitted written correspondence (via April 20, 2020 email) expressing appreciation to grocery store workers, janitorial and cleaning crews for their

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efforts with regard to COVID-19 and that April 22, 2020 marks the 50th Anniversary of Earth Day.

Daniel Hartzell, 609 Central Avenue, commented that after speaking with a meter reader, he received clarification that there is a reason for keeping parking meters on Central Avenue.

Commissioner Robinson reported that the response rate of the 2020 Census for Great Falls is 58.5 percent, Cascade County is 53.0 percent and the state average is 43.1 percent. He encouraged citizens who have not responded yet to go to 2020Census.gov.

2. REAPPOINTMENTS TO THE ADVISORY COMMISSION ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS.

Commissioner Moe moved, seconded by Commissioner Robinson, that the City Commission reappoint Lana Kadoshnikov, Charity Jacobson and Anna Schendel to the Advisory Commission on International Relationships for three-year terms through March 31, 2023.

Mayor Kelly asked if there were any comments from the public, in person or telephonically, or any discussion amongst the Commissioners. Hearing none, Mayor Kelly called for the vote.

Motion carried 5-0.

3. REAPPOINTMENTS TO THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION ADVISORY COMMISSION.

Commissioner Robinson moved, seconded by Commissioner Moe, that the City Commission reappoint Peter Jennings and Ken Robinson to the Historic Preservation Advisory Commission for three-year terms through April 30, 2023.

Mayor Kelly asked if there were any comments from the public, in person or telephonically or any discussion amongst the Commissioners.

Commissioner Robinson expressed support of reappointing Mr. Jennings and Mr. Robinson and added that they have knowledge of historical preservation, as well as the history of the County and City.

There being no further discussion, Mayor Kelly called for the vote.

Motion carried 5-0.

CITY MANAGER

4. MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.

City Manager Greg Doyon updated the Commission on the following:

Operational Update

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- There are no significant operational changes
- On April 3rd a work sheet was distributed summarizing department operations and public contact options – no changes to note from that summary
- The Civic Center is still open; offices that are closed are still taking calls, emails, and inquiries
- There has been no reports from the Commission or residents about citizens not being able to access their local government for service
- There has been impact on part-time City employees. Primarily part-time positions that work events or facilities
- There has not been any furloughs, layoffs at this time of full-time employees
- Approximately 15-20 seasonal employees in the Park and Recreation Department have filed for unemployment
- Departments worked to create alternative work models consistent with the Governor's stay-at-home order and City/County Health Department guidelines for non-essential staff

Alternate shifts, alternating in/out office days, or working remotely, or individually that includes limiting projects that require large groups – keeping physical distancing

The accountability process includes:

- Departments where the work flow has not stopped are working at home doing the same work – responding to emails, telephone calls, and working on projects
- Other departments it has been a little tougher, but employees are catching up on training, certifications, and projects
- Employees in either case have been required to keep work logs for supervisor review
 - He is relying on the department heads, their supervisors and the employees to work together to make sure that everyone is being productive during this period
- In the event this pandemic continues for an extended time, he will have to evaluate the level of productivity of employees and consider alternatives
- Human Resources (HR) is reviewing Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBA) to determine appropriate steps for reduction of hours, layoffs and furloughs
 - Approximately 75% of the workforce is unionized and some CBA's require a 30-day notice before reduction of hours, or layoff
 - If it gets to that point, it will require coordination with the department heads and labor groups to implement

STAT Summary

- Total number of employees working is 474
- Working full-time with no change is 292 or 62%
- Alternating between in office/remote work is 142 or 30%
- Working remotely full-time is 30 or 6%
- Working remotely part-time is 4 or 1%
- Extended sick leave for non-COVID-19 is 2 or 0.4%
- Working part-time or from home due to COVID-19 childcare is 2 or 0.4%

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- Not working part-time with a minor staying home under parent direction is 1 or 0%
- Not working part-time with no transit transportation is 1 or 0%

Efforts made on the onset of the pandemic

- The department head team created a plan to make sure that government was able to operate if employees became ill with the virus
- Succession plans were developed to make sure that there was continuity of governmental structure in the event that City employees became ill
- All of these efforts: 1) continuity of government 2) succession planning 3) alternative work models described are to keep Great Falls safely operating. It is also to keep employees healthy so that they may provide critical services to residents during the pandemic.

Authority of Local Government – City Manager in the face of Governor’s/Health Officers

- He declared a state of emergency on March 19, 2020
- The declaration gave him some authority to take certain actions, but it did not give him more authority than the Governor of Montana. He could direct more restrictive actions than the Governor; however, he cannot override or lessen restrictions imposed by the Governor.

Things the City had done to assist local businesses

- Action has already been taken to assist with deferring payment on water/utility bills and suspended certain ordinances to help both residents and businesses
- Belonging to the Montana League of Cities and Towns (MLCT), International Manager’s Association (ICMA) and National League of Cities and Towns (NLCT)
- Having discussions with other City Managers
- Engaging with the decision makers in Helena and providing direct feedback
- Cases appear to be stabilizing or diminishing in Cascade County and there is a shift in focus at the Emergency Operations Center (EOC)
- Begin developing plans on how to re-open Cascade County and the City of Great Falls
- Representatives from the County, City, Great Falls Area Chamber of Commerce (Chamber), Great Falls Development Authority (GFDA), Downtown Development Association (DDA) and Business Improvement District (BID) met to outline plans to re-open the community
- As a result of that meeting:
 - Chamber, GFDA, BID, Downtown Business Association (DBA) will define business/establishment sectors for focus groups
 - EOC participants will be assigned a sector and act as a liaison
 - City-County Health Department (CCHD) will provide a framework for businesses to reopen using appropriate medical protocols
 - Group convene again after the Governor’s press conference this week

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- Why do this if we don't have authority to soften the Governor's directive?
 - Participants in the process will be a resource to decision makers in Helena
 - The Governor's guidance may require local administration – as such we need to have a plan in place
 - The Library staff will be assisting with conducting a focus survey to engage the business community directly to hear their concerns and ideas
- A press release from the CCHD was released that explains the recovery process
 - He appreciates the efforts of the GFDA, Chamber, BID and DBA

Looking Ahead

- Staff is working on the budget
 - Baseline budget
 - Critical needs
 - Review with Commission
 - Impact will be one - two years out
- Possible work session to discuss doing a study for the indoor pool

Commissioner Tryon inquired about the following:

- Steps the City has taken to cut expenses during COVID-19
- The classification of non-essential employees
- Monitoring productivity of employees working remotely
- The efforts the City can do to get private sector businesses and its employees back to work
- Alleged letter from Mayor Kelly sent to Governor Bullock regarding the Governor's re-opening plans

City Manager responded that the City has taken steps cutting expenses by delaying certain capital projects. The City is following Federal Government directives with regard to the classification of non-essential employees. He explained that there has to be a measure of trust with employees working remotely and they are required to keep work logs for their supervisors.

Referring to Commissioner Tryon's inquiry about an alleged letter, Mayor Kelly responded that no such letter was sent to the Governor and the only letter sent to Governor Bullock was inquiring about what it was going to look like to reopen businesses.

Mayor Kelly expressed appreciation to City Manager Doyon for his thorough report and efforts throughout the COVID-19 situation.

CONSENT AGENDA.

5. Minutes, April 7, 2020, City Commission Meeting.
6. Total Expenditures of \$1,200,280 for the period of March 15, 2020 through April 8, 2020, to include claims over \$5000, in the amount of \$994,876.

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7. Contracts List.
8. Postpone Public Hearing Riverside, Westside, American Little League Lease Agreements to May 5, 2020 Commission Meeting.
9. Approval of a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funding Agreement for the purchase of a replacement fire engine pumper truck to serve Fire Station #1.
10. Approve the purchase of one 2019 Pierce Enforcer Fire Apparatus from Hughes Fire Equipment of Spokane, Washington, through H-GAC (Houston-Galveston Area Council) for \$494,335.
11. Adopt Resolution 10343, relating to \$3,200,000 Tax Increment Urban Renewal Revenue and Refunding Bonds (West Bank Urban Renewal District), Series 2020; Authorizing the sale and prescribing the forms and terms thereof and the security therefor.

Commissioner Moe moved, seconded by Commissioner Houck, that the City Commission approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

Mayor Kelly asked if there were any comments from the public or discussion amongst the Commissioners.

Deputy City Clerk Darcy Dea noted that **Kevin Westie**, 602 35th Street North, submitted written correspondence (via April 21, 2020 email) pertaining to Agenda Item 10. Mr. Westie inquired if the purchase of the Fire Apparatus will raise the on time response percentage of the Fire Department.

Referring to Mr. Westie's written inquiry about Agenda Item 10, Fire Chief Hester responded that the purchase of the Fire Apparatus would not have an effect on response times since there is not an increase of apparatus or Fire Rescue staff.

Brett Doney, Great Falls Development Authority, 405 3rd Street NW, Suite 203, submitted written correspondence (via April 16, 2020 email) pertaining to Agenda Item 11. In summary, Mr. Doney expressed support of the motion to adopt Resolution 10343.

Referring to Agenda Item 9, Commissioner Tryon expressed support of utilizing Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding for the purchase of a replacement fire engine pumper truck. He inquired if CDBG funding could be applied to help fund Police Department operations.

Planning and Community Development Director responded that the Police Department is always considered with regard to use of CDBG funds for specific projects, as long as the project meets CDBG requirements.

Commissioner Robinson urged the Commission to be cautious with regard to suggesting how CDBG funds should be utilized.

Commissioner Moe commented that Agenda Item 9 is an excellent way of utilizing CDGB funds

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and thanked City staff for their efforts with regard to making sure the funding was used appropriately.

There being no one further to address the Commission, Mayor Kelly called for the vote.

Motion carried 5-0.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

OLD BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

ORDINANCES/RESOLUTIONS

CITY COMMISSION

MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.

Mayor Kelly announced that the Montana League of Cities and Towns (MLCT) Board of Directors will meet on April 23, 2020 and will provide input with regard to the Governor's Task Force. Surveys about how the COVID-19 situation is affecting City operations is being sent out to all municipalities. The Governor's website allows citizens to give input on how the task force should allocate funds and explains what the task force can do.

Mayor Kelly announced that he attended a Cascade County Disaster and Emergency Service (DES) meeting with regard to implementing a re-opening strategy for the City and County. He expressed appreciation to the community for their efforts with regard to staying safe.

Commissioner Robinson commented that the Governor's Task Force is well represented by several businesses. He expressed support of re-opening businesses as soon as possible; however, he is concerned that a second wave of COVID-19 could be more serious than the first. Commissioner Robinson urged using caution with regard to re-opening up businesses too soon.

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ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Commission, **Commissioner Moe moved, seconded by Commissioner Robinson, to adjourn the regular meeting of April 21, 2020, at 8:00 p.m.**

Motion carried 5-0.

Mayor Kelly

Deputy City Clerk Darcy Dea

Minutes Approved: May 5, 2020