

**JOURNAL OF CITY COMMISSION WORK SESSION**  
**June 2, 2020**

City Commission Work Session  
Civic Center, Commission Chambers Room 206

Mayor Kelly presiding

**CALL TO ORDER:** 5:30 p.m.

**CITY COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:** Bob Kelly, Mary Sheehy Moe, Tracy Houck and Rick Tryon. Commissioner Owen Robinson was excused.

**STAFF PRESENT:** City Manager Greg Doyon and Deputy City Manager Chuck Anderson; City Attorney Sara Sexe; Animal Shelter Manager Lynn Formell; Finance Director Melissa Kinzler; and, Deputy City Clerk Darcy Dea.

Due to the COVID-19 health concerns, the format of the City Commission meeting may be modified to accommodate Commission member attendance in person, via a remote location/virtual meeting method, or to appear telephonically. In order to honor the Right of Participation and the Right to Know (Article II, Sections 8 and 9 of the Montana Constitution), modifications have also been made for public participation. Public participation is welcome in the following ways:

- 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 Commission Chambers according to applicable health guidelines.
- Provide public comments via email. Comments may be sent via email before 5:00 PM on Tuesday, June 2, 2020, to: [commission@greatfallsmt.net](mailto: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 will be so noted in the official record of the meeting.
- Call-in. The public may call in during the public comment period 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.
- The agenda packet material is available on the City's website: <https://greatfallsmt.net/meetings>. The Public may view and listen to the meeting on government access channel City-190, cable channel 190; or online at <https://greatfallsmt.net/livestream>. Public comment will be taken during the meeting as indicated on the agenda with an asterisk.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

**Sheriff Jesse Slaughter, 3800 Ulm North Frontage Rd,** Cascade County Sheriff's Office, commented that the Great Falls Animal Shelter assists the County with regard to animal hoarding cases and that it is a great partnership. Sheriff Slaughter expressed concern with regard to the Maclean-Cameron Animal Adoption Center (MCAAC) not accepting large turn-ins of animals from hoarding cases.

## **1. ANIMAL SHELTER REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL REVIEW**

Libbey Winderl, 4501 12th Street NE, Animal Foundation of Great Falls Board of Trustees President, reviewed and discussed the attached PowerPoint presentation covering background, summary of proposal, major advantages of a contract between the city and foundation, conclusion and contact information.

Referring to Sheriff Slaughter's concern, Pam Volk, 1128 23rd Avenue SW, Maclean-Cameron Animal Adoption Center Executive Director, explained that a statement in the original proposal about the MCAAC not accepting animals from hoarding cases was misinterpreted. She clarified that the Heart of the Valley (HOV) Shelter in Bozeman does not accept large turn-ins of animals from hoarding cases. Ms. Volk added that accepting animals from hoarding cases could be further discussed.

Ms. Volk noted that the City would be obligated to assist the County with hoarding cases if there is a contract between the two entities. She explained that the MCAAC has offered to assist the County with regard to a recent hoarding issue; however, the County has not responded. The MCAAC takes in stray animals brought in by the public; however, Animal Control does not bring strays to the MCAAC. Ms. Volk clarified that the MCAAC is not indicating that it provides a better quality of care than the Animal Shelter and respects all that the Animal Shelter does for the community. She explained that quality of care refers to the type of building, spacing and environment provided for the animals.

Ms. Volk explained that the amount in the proposal includes housing animals sent from the Animal Shelter that are past the 96-hour holding period. She expressed concern with regard to receiving electronic communications between the Commission and Deputy City Manager Chuck Anderson in an untimely manner and making it difficult to prepare responses to the questions. She discussed several differences, comparisons, discrepancies and data about the MCAAC and other private and municipal animal shelters.

Commissioner Moe reiterated that her focus remains on cost savings to the City and not as much with the quality of care of animals. She expressed concern that the City would spend more money with regard to the MCAAC's proposal.

Commissioner Tryon concurred with Commissioner Moe with regard to the importance for cost savings to the City and added that he has not seen that with the MCAAC's proposal. He pointed out that the City Finance and Legal Departments' input is important before moving forward. He received clarification that the 2010 Animal Shelter Study is available on the City's website.

Ms. Winderl responded that the MCAAC requested additional information clarifying the City's expenses; however, the MCAAC has not received a clear answer. Ms. Winderl requested to have an additional meeting open to the public and include the City Legal and Finance Departments to help identify an accurate cost. The MCAAC has talked to other private-public partnerships in the state to see how they made things work. At the time that the MCAAC submitted its proposal, construction of the Cattery at the Animal Shelter had already begun with the efforts of the public donating to the Help Us Grow "HUG" Project.

Mayor Kelly inquired about adoption and stray services, as well as the Animal Shelter's biggest concern with regard to sending animals past the 96-hour holding period to the MCAAC.

Animal Shelter Manager Lynn Formell responded that the Animal Shelter's primary responsibility is stray services and not owner-surrendered animals. The Animal Shelter is an open-admission municipal shelter that has an obligation to unowned, abandoned animals. Stray animals are usually put up for adoption after the 96-hour holding period, unless an incarcerated individual will not give up their rights to their animal or if the animal needs rehabilitation. The residual cost for a 96-hour holding period of 1400 stray animals is approximately \$491,000. Other shelters in the state assist the Animal Shelter with adoption services at no charge.

Animal Shelter Manager Formell explained that the Animal Shelter staff has put forth much effort into making several improvements to the facility on a limited budget, including adoptions, lost and found services, and supported the Humane Society over the past several years. Manager Formell continued that her biggest concern would be taking the joy and passion out of the Animal Shelter staff, as well as bringing back the stigma referring to the City Animal Shelter as the City Pound again.

Commissioner Moe expressed concern that there are two entities side-by-side providing a service that is not required by law for either of them and duplicating resources. She commented that the Commission has an obligation to explore ways of saving the City money, as well as addressing all of the concerns discussed tonight.

Commissioner Houck expressed concern about the amount of effort spent focusing on trying to find a cost savings and not knowing if one even exists. She commented that she would rather see the Commission pursue other topics until there is a solid proposal.

Mayor Kelly requested that staff determine the number of animals at the Animal Shelter past the 96-hour holding period due to incarcerated individuals who do not give up their rights to their animals, as well as steps the City can take against these individuals. He added that the goal is to get the animals adopted out to a good home, whether it is the Animal Shelter or the MCAAC. Mayor Kelly suggested having another meeting after receiving clarification and more detail about the information discussed tonight.


### **DISCUSSION OF POTENTIAL UPCOMING WORK SESSION TOPICS**

City Manager Greg Doyon reported that the June 16<sup>th</sup> work session will consist of an update on financing options for the Civic Center Façade as well as the 2020 Budget Primer. The Defense Critical Infrastructure Program (DCIP) Grant topic will be added to an upcoming work session.


### **ADJOURN**

There being no further discussion, Mayor Kelly adjourned the informal work session of June 2, 2020 at 6:50 p.m.






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### BACKGROUND

- **February 24, 2020** - the Animal Foundation of Great Falls submitted a proposal in response to the RFP.
- **March 3, 2020** - City staff provided a presentation on the Foundation's proposal referencing some confusion.
- **March 11, 2020** - John Huber and Libbey Winderl submitted a letter to the Commission and staff clarifying the proposal and addressing staff's concerns.
- **March 17, 2020** - Had planned to be on the agenda, but Covid-19 led to major changes and delays.
- **Today** - Further a conversation about a potential agreement between the City and the Foundation for adoption and education services.




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### SUMMARY OF PROPOSAL

**From page 8 of the Proposal:**

The Animal Foundation of Great Falls proposes to utilize the Center to assume all responsibility for animal adoption and fostering services, fundraising, and education to the community.

The City of Great Falls would retain responsibility for the intake and timely release to owners of stray animals, 72/96 hour hold periods for impounded strays, operation of its crematorium, and its statutory responsibility for animal control services.





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### MAJOR ADVANTAGES OF A CONTRACT BETWEEN THE CITY & FOUNDATION

**First, Maclean-Cameron Animal Adoption Center will provide a superior quality of care than currently provided at the City Shelter**

The Maclean-Cameron Animal Adoption Center has taken massive steps in designing and building the Center to maximize quality of care:

- Regular air exchange to minimize infection
- Sound barriers to minimize anxiety/stress
- Lighting and daylight to minimize anxiety/stress
- Floor coverings to provide higher levels of cleanliness
- Configuration and size of suites to minimize anxiety/stress
- Odor control and sanitation

**Example:** Cats housed in shelters without adequate air exchanges are affected by respiratory infections at a significantly higher rate. The respiratory infections caused by inadequate air exchanges result in increased veterinary costs, suffering for the animals, and negatively affect adoption rates. For that reason, the Foundation chose to invest in an exchange system with separate zones for animals with various needs, to include those in medical isolation, newly incoming, and those cleared for adoption. The Center's air exchange system in these areas provides up to 12 fresh air room exchanges per hour in order to reduce the spread of infection.

1. Having completed construction of a state-of-the-art facility in 2015, the Foundation turned to its primary mission: Meeting or exceeding standards with regard to the care and treatment of its shelter animals (extensively documented in the proposal's attached exhibits).
2. A study of the City Shelter, conducted in 2010, concluded that "... the existing City shelter, which was built in 1972 was outdated and in desperate need of replacement," and that it was, "... not salvageable as an animal shelter." - Kim Steton
3. Even though the City has made upgrades to the Shelter, to include constructing a catery, it is evident that City Shelter does not provide the same quality of care as the Center does.



Maclean-Cameron  
Animal Adoption Center

**CONTACT INFORMATION**



Any questions may be directed to the Animal Foundation of Great Falls:

**Libbey Winderl, Board President**  
406.731.2993  
libbey.winderl@edwardjones.com

**Pam Volk, Executive Director**  
406.727.7387  
director@macleananimaladoptioncenter.com

**John Huber, Board Trustee**  
406.788.9976  
jhuber@dadco.com



*Thank you*

From the Animal Foundation of Great Falls  
Maclean-Cameron Animal Adoption Center