

JOURNAL OF CITY COMMISSION WORK SESSION
March 16, 2021

City Commission Work Session
Civic Center Gibson Room 212

Mayor Kelly presiding

CALL TO ORDER: 5:30 PM

Due to the COVID-19 health concerns, the format of the City Commission Work Session was held in a virtual video-conferencing environment.

ROLL CALL/STAFF INTRODUCTIONS: City Commission members participated electronically via Zoom Webinar: Bob Kelly, Tracy Houck, Mary Sheehy Moe, Owen Robinson and Rick Tryon. City Staff participating electronically were: City Manager Greg Doyon and City Attorney Sara Sexe. Fire Chief Jeremy Jones was present in the Gibson Room, and Deputy City Clerk Darcy Dea was present in the Commission Chambers.

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 as follows:

- Attend in person. The City will be following the Cascade County Board of Health and the Public Health Officer Orders. Masks will be required and social distancing will be enforced. Public following these directives may view and participate in the meeting from the Gibson Room. Please refrain from attending in person if you are not feeling well.
- Attend the virtual meeting utilizing Zoom Webinar. Attendees must register in advance for the Commission Meeting: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_L4Lkqb-MQM-ln75SDdfrew. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar by Zoom.
- Participate by phone. Attendees must register in advance for the Commission Meeting using the link above. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar by phone. If you do not have internet access you may contact the Great Falls Public Library prior to the meeting at 453-9706 and they can assist with registration.
- Provide public comments in writing. Submit comments via mail addressed to City Clerk's Office, PO Box 5021, Great Falls, MT 59403 or by email to: commission@greatfallsmtnet.net by 12:00 PM the day of the meeting.
- The agenda packet material is available on the City's website: <https://greatfallsmtnet.net/meetings>. The Public may view and listen to the meeting on cable channel 190, or online at <https://greatfallsmtnet.net/livestream>.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Kevin Westie, 602 35th Street North, opined that constructing an aquatics center first rather than a multi-use building would be beneficial to the community.

David Saslav, 2736 Clover Drive, announced that he is a member of an energy group for the aquatics/recreation center and has met with architects about enhancing energy efficiency of the building. He suggested that the Commission consider Architects lead certification processes and standards.

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Written communication was received from **Stacy Hopkins**, City resident, facetiously thanking City officials for prolonging and delaying the proposed partnership with the Maclean Cameron Animal Adoption Center.

1. **CRIME TASK FORCE**

Commissioner Tryon discussed a draft Great Falls Crime Task Force outline that included the following; purpose, members, process, scope and timeline. He reported that several citizens have expressed concern that the local criminal justice system focuses on helping the offender rather than protecting law abiding citizens. He added that they are also concerned about not enough emphasis being put on restitution, as well as not protecting citizens from crimes associated with drug addiction. The focus of the Crime Task Force is to solve issues within the City's purview, make specific recommendations, provide a cost and show what the impact would be.

Commissioner Moe suggested changing "reduce" crime with "respond" to crime in Section 1 of the draft Resolution. She expressed concern that the draft Resolution was not provided to the public prior to the Commission meeting. Commissioner Moe explained that data proves drug addiction is the primary cause of crime in the community. She supports the Crime Task Force initiative as long as drug addiction is addressed and treated as a health issue. She concluded that input from the Native American community is important with regard to the work of the Crime Task Force.

Commissioner Robinson commented that crime is driven by alcohol, gambling and many other addictions.

Commissioner Houck commented that a Crime Task Force initiative is a good start to addressing crime issues in the community. She expressed concern with regard to the initiative being a task force or an internal project. Commissioner Houck added that data from Staff who have knowledge and experience in local crime issues and causes would be beneficial. She suggested considering Victim Witness Assistance Services as a member of the Crime Task Force.

City Manager Greg Doyon announced that the draft Resolution establishing a Crime Task Force would be posted on the City's website on March 17, 2021. He explained that City staff, along with outside organizations would be involved in the Crime Task Force. Manager Doyon commented that crime problems in the community would never be solved; however, there are things the City could do to better manage it. Staff needs to determine what areas the City can affect with the resources it has. The goal is to be strategic by targeting areas that have the most criminal activity. The Crime Task Force, along with outside organizations that are able to better address crime issues, would be included in the scope of services.

Manager Doyon requested that the Commission provide feedback with regard to the wording of draft Resolution 10395 prior to the April 6, 2021 Commission meeting.

DISCUSSION OF POTENTIAL UPCOMING WORK SESSION TOPICS

Manager Doyon reported that the April 6th work session will consist of a Prosecutors and Semi Annual Litigation update. The April 20th work session will consist of a Neighborhood Council #6 update and a TIF Program Allowances update.

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Commissioner Robinson requested to postpone the Semi Annual Litigation update until the Commission can meet in the Chambers to avoid having an executive session via a virtual video-conferencing environment.

Commissioner Houck expressed concern with regard to having two large topics at a work session.

Fire Chief Jeremy Jones received clarification, on behalf of **David Saslav**, that public comment for the Crime Task Force agenda item was at the beginning of the work session.

Commissioner Moe requested that the American Rescue Plan be added to an upcoming work session topic list. She announced that she will not seek re-election to the City Commission because she is busy serving on other public boards and doesn't feel she has the time to devote to the commissioner role. Commissioner Moe expressed appreciation to Manager Doyon and Staff for being knowledgeable, professional, hardworking and full of integrity.

Mayor Kelly announced that he recently attended a Business Bureau of Economics Research (BBER) Conference and the affordable housing crisis was a topic. He requested that NeighborWorks Great Falls Executive Director Sherrie Arey present at an upcoming work session with regard to the affordable housing crisis.

Manager Doyon added that developers from the community should also attend the upcoming work session to discuss their challenges and requirements with regard to the affordable housing crisis.

ADJOURN

There being no further discussion, Mayor Kelly adjourned the informal work session of March 16, 2021 at 6:35 p.m.