

**JOURNAL OF COMMISSION WORK SESSION**  
**January 18, 2022**

City Commission Work Session  
Civic Center, Gibson Room 212

Mayor Kelly presiding

**CALL TO ORDER: 5:30 PM**

**CITY COMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:** Bob Kelly, Joe McKenney, Susan Wolff, Eric Hinebauch, and Rick Tryon.

**STAFF PRESENT:** City Manager Greg Doyon and Deputy City Manager Chuck Anderson; City Attorney Jeff Hindoiem; Finance Director Melissa Kinzler; Fire Marshall Mike McIntosh and Deputy Chief of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Jeremy Virts; Police Chief Jeff Newton; and, Deputy City Clerk Darcy Dea.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**



None.

**1. NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL UPDATES – NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL # 2.**

Neighborhood Council #2 Chairperson Shyla Patera was unable to present due to personal reasons.

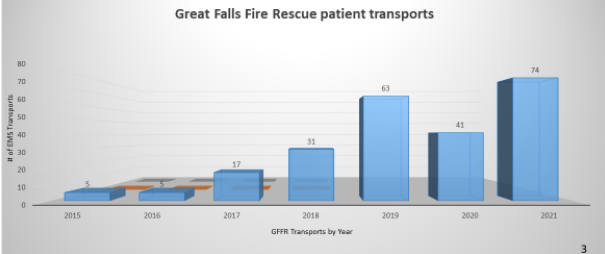
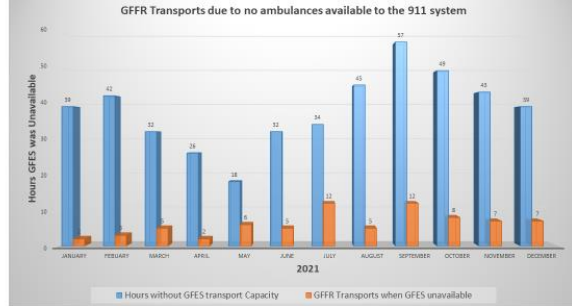

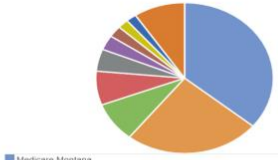
**2. FIRE RESCUE AMBULANCE TRANSPORT COST RECOVERY.**

Deputy Chief of EMS Jeremy Virts reviewed and discussed the following PowerPoint:

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Great Falls Fire Rescue Ambulance Transport Cost Recovery</b></p> <div style="text-align: center;"></div>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>GFFR EMS Transport Billing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Currently there is no mechanism for GFFR transport cost recovery</li><li>• GFFR has a very limited budget to provide EMS services</li><li>• GFFR has seen the transport role significantly increase in six years</li><li>• 67 % of 911 call volume is EMS</li></ul> <p style="text-align: right;">2</p>
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<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Progression of GFFR Ambulance Transports from 2015-2021</b></p>  <p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">3</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>GFFR Transports due to no ambulances available to the 911 system</b></p> 																																				
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>EMS Transport Billing Administration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EMS transport billing requires knowledge and expertise in Medicare, Medicaid, and Insurance</li> <li>• Requires employees dedicated to perform billing functions</li> <li>• Knowledgeable in Montana Fire Based EMS transport departments</li> <li>• GFFR recommends entering a Professional Services Agreement with Pintler Billing &amp; Administrative Solutions</li> </ul>  <p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">5</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Claim Volume Top Ten Payers</b></p>  <table border="1" style="width: 100%; font-size: x-small; margin-top: 5px;"> <thead> <tr> <th>Payer</th> <th>Count</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>Medicare Montana</td><td>401</td><td>36.0%</td></tr> <tr><td>Medicaid Montana</td><td>275</td><td>24.7%</td></tr> <tr><td>Humana</td><td>95</td><td>9.5%</td></tr> <tr><td>BCBS Montana</td><td>81</td><td>7.3%</td></tr> <tr><td>VA Fee Basis Programs</td><td>53</td><td>4.8%</td></tr> <tr><td>Blue Cross Montana (Medicare Advantage)</td><td>35</td><td>3.1%</td></tr> <tr><td>United Healthcare Direct</td><td>27</td><td>2.4%</td></tr> <tr><td>Allegiance Benefits Plan Management, Inc</td><td>22</td><td>2.0%</td></tr> <tr><td>Medicare Railroad</td><td>21</td><td>1.9%</td></tr> <tr><td>Other</td><td>104</td><td>9.3%</td></tr> <tr><td><b>Total</b></td><td><b>1,114</b></td><td></td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">6</p>	Payer	Count	Percentage	Medicare Montana	401	36.0%	Medicaid Montana	275	24.7%	Humana	95	9.5%	BCBS Montana	81	7.3%	VA Fee Basis Programs	53	4.8%	Blue Cross Montana (Medicare Advantage)	35	3.1%	United Healthcare Direct	27	2.4%	Allegiance Benefits Plan Management, Inc	22	2.0%	Medicare Railroad	21	1.9%	Other	104	9.3%	<b>Total</b>	<b>1,114</b>	
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City Manager Doyon reported that the City is contracted with the Great Falls Emergency Services (GFES) for transport services.

Commissioner Tryon received clarification that the increase of GFFR patient transports in 2021 was more than likely caused by COVID-19. He further received clarification that a contract with Pintler Billing Services would include paying Pintler a minimum of \$6,000 per year or by the amount of transports.

Mayor Kelly received clarification that Pintler Billing Service has approximately 41 clients in Montana that include private and public EMS services. He further received clarification that patients who are transported would receive a bill to submit to their insurance company.

Commissioner Wolff commented that recovering EMS transport costs is important and she expressed support of pursuing an agreement with Pintler Billing Service.

Commissioner McKenney received clarification that GFES is a small, private business with limited staff, and that the GFFR may need additional staff and ambulances in the future.

Deputy Chief of EMS Virts added that the GFFR also relies on grant funds to assist with transport cost recovery.

It was the consensus of the Commission that GFFR pursue an agreement with Pintler Billing Service and to provide the Commission with a cash flow chart.

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**3. AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARPA) FUNDING – APPLICATION PROCESS.**

Finance Director Melissa Kinzler provided and discussed a Draft American Recovery Plan Act Application with edits, suggested changes, as well as grammatical corrections from Commissioner Wolff.

Finance Director Kinzler reviewed the following updates to the Draft Application:

- Set July 15, 2022 as the due date
- Page 3, Available Funds category, the word “bases” will be corrected to “basis”
- Page 5, C4, “funds may not be used as federal match dollars for other grant opportunities” language will be clarified
- Page 5, D4, add a time limit to programs that have not received funding from other sources
- The minimum grant request is \$40,000 and it has not been determined if the City would have an administrative fee for the grant request. The City would monitor the performance of Grant recipients, as well as sub-recipients
- Page 6, 3C, replace the word “encouraged” with “required”
- Page 9, sub-recipients would be required to collect and track data with regard to income and health impacts
- Page 15, 3, add “describe Federal Grant Management experience”

Mayor Kelly expressed concern with regard to excluding programs that have not received funding from other sources. He received clarification that in order to be considered eligible, expenses must be incurred between March 31, 2021 and September 30, 2024, and all project funds must be expended by September 30, 2026.

Commissioner Wolff expressed concern with regard to leaving things vague in the application and she added that being more specific now will save City staff time.

City Manager Doyon explained that City staff is providing a definitive due date for applications because it will be harder for the Commission to allocate the ARPA funding without knowing the amount of applications that will be received from the public.

Mayor Kelly expressed support with regard to utilizing established groups, such as the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Review Team, that would review and score applications.

Commissioner Wolff also suggested that City staff provide the Commission with a scoring rubric with regard to how the applications would be reviewed.

Finance Director Kinzler responded that page 7 of the application already includes a rubric with regard to the review process and scoring; however, it could be refined and have more details.

City Manager Doyon suggested that page 8H of the application needs to be clear, stating that any award would be subject to all federal requirements.

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Commissioner McKenney inquired about the process for monitoring the performance of grant recipients to ensure that ARPA funds are used appropriately.

Finance Director Kinzler responded that the Finance Department oversees all City Departments with regard to the process of collecting invoices of grants that are spent, providing a quarterly reporting to the federal government, making sure that all expenses meet the requirements of the ARPA funding and paying out the funds to the appropriate recipients.

Commissioner Wolff added that the City needs to be cognizant of utilizing staff time for monitoring the performance of grant recipients and that the Federal government may possibly change the reporting requirements.

Finance Director Kinzler responded that additional reporting and audit requirements were required for CARES funds. She added that the September 30, 2026 due date would allow enough time for final audits and reporting.

Commissioner Tryon expressed support with regard to utilizing all funds for public safety and infrastructure needs within the City. He inquired if City Departments would go through the same review process as community partners.

City Manager Doyon responded that City staff will prioritize, based on community needs, the list of projects that was submitted prior to the Treasury's Final Rule. He added that there would need to be a commitment, with regard to the use of the funds, either through the budget process or by Commission approval.

Commissioner Tryon expressed concern that the July 15, 2022 due date is too soon, as well as the application process for community partners and sub-recipients.

Mayor Kelly responded that determining a specific amount to make available to community partners for their projects would make them aware of the balance between City needs and their needs. Community partners would have focused projects that will have an effect on the problems that COVID-19 has created. There are reporting requirements in the application that requires those agencies to monitor the allocation of funds for projects and the City would monitor the validity of the project.

Commissioner Hinebauch inquired about the time frame for determining an amount to allocate to community partners.

Mayor Kelly replied that the time frame should be determined after consideration of the budget, CARES and ARPA funds as a whole.

Commissioner Hinebauch expressed support of determining the City's needs, as well as a specific amount to be allocated for community partners, prior to the July 15, 2022 application due date.

Commissioner Tryon expressed support of sending out the application, with the understanding that there may not be any money available for community partners.

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Commissioner Wolff commented that the focus should be evaluating City Departments and community partners' progress, and applications based on measurable outcomes. The process needs to be "outcomes-based" to ensure that the City is utilizing the funds wisely.

Commissioner McKenney expressed support of determining a percentage of the \$19 million that would be allocated to community partners.

Mayor Kelly reiterated that the Treasury's Final Rule allows \$10 million for other government services and he requested that City Manager Doyon review the projects that were not considered prior to the Rule. He added that this is an opportunity to be creative with ways to solve some of the City's issues, including public safety and extending infrastructure.

Finance Director Kinzler added that some of the restrictions may still apply with regard to extending infrastructure and that City staff will look into it.

Commissioner Tryon explained that the City has an opportunity to utilize \$19 million for public safety and infrastructure needs in the City and that community partners receive Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding yearly.

After further discussion, City Manager Doyon concluded that the prior projects list would be updated and the application would be revised to provide more clarity, specifically with regard to sub-recipients.

**DISCUSSION OF POTENTIAL UPCOMING WORK SESSION TOPICS**

City Manager Greg Doyon reported that the February 1, 2022 work session includes a Quarterly Budget Review and an update about Adoption of the Permitting section of the International Fire Code.

Mayor Kelly suggested suspending Neighborhood Council updates until the beginning of April, due to the full work session topic list.

Commissioner Tryon suggested that an update about the recommendations from the Crime Task Force (CTF) be added to an upcoming work session.

City Manager Doyon responded that Neighborhood Council members could provide updates during the miscellaneous reports and announcements from Neighborhood Councils portion of the City Commission meetings. He further responded that Police Chief Jeff Newton was working on a draft document with regard to CTF recommendations and it would be presented at an upcoming work session.

Commissioner McKenney suggested that the CTF recommendations draft document contain three sections, including:

- Recommendations that the City could do something about now
- Moderate (affordable) recommendations
- Recommendations that may require a levy

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Mayor Kelly announced that a Board, Commission and Council training will be on January 27, 2022 and a State of the City Presentation will be on January 31, 2022.

**ADJOURN**

There being no further discussion, Mayor Kelly adjourned the informal work session of January 18, 2022 at 6:51 p.m.