

JOURNAL OF SPECIAL CITY COMMISSION WORK SESSION MEETING
The Ranches at Belt Creek, 277 Armington Road, Belt, MT
February 23, 2022

City Commission Retreat

City Commission members present: Bob Kelly, Eric Hinebauch, Joe McKenney, Rick Tryon, and Susan Wolff.

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

Facilitator: Mark Willmarth, Training/Development Coordinator

Lunch – 12:00 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Kelly called the meeting to order at 12:47 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Josh Butterfly, City resident and member of Let Them Come Home, an independent organization that helps individuals after a term of incarceration get back on their feet, provided a handout and discussed a chemical spill of Firefighter GL 38 antifreeze that happened at Boston's Pizza and Sports Bar on July 28, 2019. He also alleged U.S. Census fraud at the Department of Corrections (DOC). He discussed his campaign to address DOC policies of counting incarcerated individuals as residents of their prison cells rather than residents of their home districts/communities so that the funding allocation goes back to those communities where the incarcerated are from.

1. FACILITATED SESSION WITH MARK WILLMARTH ON COMMISSION PRIORITIES FOR 2022

Facilitator 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 or four collective priorities for the next 12 to 18 months.

City Manager Greg Doyon reviewed and discussed his 2021 Work Plan, noting that the work plan will be used by the Commission to gauge his performance during his annual review, and briefly discussed prior City Commission priorities from FY 2009 through FY 2020.

With regard to a prior Commission priority pertaining to animal services, he explained the six-year history of unsuccessful attempts to pursue a partnership with the Board of Trustees of the MacLean-Cameron Animal Adoption Center, including his suggestion of a pilot program. He would want clear direction from a majority of the Commission if this matter comes up again. Mayor Kelly commented that he appreciates the fact that Manager Doyon does not want to go there again, and there are no assurances that MacLean could carry the load.

JOURNAL OF SPECIAL CITY COMMISSION WORK SESSION MEETING
The Ranches at Belt Creek, 277 Armington Road, Belt, MT
February 23, 2022

As the 2022 goals are drafted, Manager Doyon asked the Commission to be considerate of what is currently on his and staff's plate. He wants a focused staff on maximizing the use of ARPA/Cares funds.

Facilitator Willmarth asked for Commission observations about the City, the work plan, and their role on the Commission. The following general observations were made:

- The City is well run under Manager Doyon's leadership and the Department Heads have clear direction of what is expected of them
- The on-boarding process prepared the Commissioners well for their new role
- The new Commission members had similar campaign themes of City growth, economic development, safety and a livable community
- There is not a lot of money for wish list items. ARPA funds will help the City get caught up on some deferred maintenance
- City leadership is waiting for the Commission to make decisions and provide direction
- Accomplishments have been made without a lot on the taxpayers. There is momentum and confidence to go further

Facilitator Willmarth asked what their take away was from the State of the City presentation. A roundtable discussion included:

- Dealing with public safety moving forward
- The opportunity for ARPA/Cares funds to meet a need, and how best to use the funds for long-term impact
- The City has been good stewards of taxpayer money and is poised to move forward
- Department Heads work well together
- ARPA/Cares funds are an opportunity to focus on preparation for growth
- Adequate planning and education for a successful combined public safety levy
- A two-step approach to carry out the Crime Task Force recommendations - the low hanging fruit and a long term plan
- Communication is key. The City needs to step up its role of education and communication to prepare the community for a public safety levy and the recommendations of the Crime Task Force. It appears that the Communication Coordinator position is underutilized and should be moved into a more active role, possibly by hiring a part-time Neighborhood Council Coordinator

Break 1:55 – 2:18 p.m.

Facilitator Willmarth requested that each Commission member now take turns responding to the following:

JOURNAL OF SPECIAL CITY COMMISSION WORK SESSION MEETING
The Ranches at Belt Creek, 277 Armington Road, Belt, MT
February 23, 2022

Why do you choose to be part of the City Commission? What has been the most interesting or challenging part of your experience?

Commissioner Wolff commented that, prior to being elected, she was involved in economic development and workforce development. She wants to continue to contribute to the community, and loves learning and her role on the Commission. A challenge is the homeless population.

Commissioner Tryon discussed his love of growing up in Great Falls and then moving away. Great Falls was not as he had remembered when he moved back to raise his family. He has been involved in public policy because he wants Great Falls to be that great place again and live up to its potential. As a member of the City Commission, he is part of a team to make that happen. This Commission has a lot of potential to move the ball forward. A challenge is getting everyone on the same page.

Commissioner McKenney discussed his service in the Navy, being in business for himself, serving at the Legislature and becoming a realtor. He always wanted to give back to the community in some way. Great Falls did not see the fruit of his legislative efforts, so he focused his efforts toward the City Commission. A challenge to him is communication - not being able to collectively have a conversation to avoid a quorum.

Commissioner Hinebauch commented that he ran for the City Commission to represent his age demographic, and wants to get others involved. He wants to see Great Falls grow. A challenge is how to be proactive with funding constraints.

Mayor Kelly discussed being on the Commission as an agent of change. Being on the Commission allows access to other communities and state resources, and the opportunity to keep looking outside and not just within Great Falls.

What do you want Great Falls to look like in 10 years?

Commissioner Tryon wants to look back and say “I was part of the team that made Great Falls the safest community.”

Commissioner McKenney wants to see vibrancy, and hustle and bustle downtown. He wants the community attitude to change and see people that are happy to live here.

Mayor Kelly commented that he wants a much larger selection of diverse housing opportunities, more established neighborhoods with amenities, and more diverse employment opportunities. He also wants the average age of governing bodies to be significantly lower.

Commissioner Hinebauch agreed with prior comments pertaining to housing and employment, and added that he would like to see well managed growth, and the younger generation being involved.

Commissioner Wolff commented she would like to see pride in growth/change, established neighborhoods, diverse employment, especially bio-sciences, and the Commission being the rallying voice for a vibrant community.

JOURNAL OF SPECIAL CITY COMMISSION WORK SESSION MEETING
The Ranches at Belt Creek, 277 Armington Road, Belt, MT
February 23, 2022

What are the top three priorities/critical issues you would like to see addressed in 2022? (Why are those important? How will we pay for it?)

Commissioner Hinebauch responded his priorities are (1) successfully passing a public safety levy, (2) more housing inventory, and (3) comprehensively prioritizing ARPA/Cares funds and allocating the funds to the right community partners.

Commissioner Wolff agreed with Commissioner Hinebauch. She added that comprehensive planning/master plan needs to drive the growth, and to use the expertise of the best community partners to utilize the ARPA/Cares funds in the most efficient manner.

Commissioner Tryon responded (1) public safety, (2) infrastructure, and (3) quality of life. It's important to him that the Commission decide which Crime Task Force recommendations to implement; how to utilize ARPA to meet the needs, including infrastructure; and, to make a long range or growth plan a priority to define where there is potential for growth and not just focus on downtown development.

Commissioner McKenney responded (1) economic development for a growing and vibrant community, (2) housing (being deliberate in areas of growth by listening to and supporting entrepreneurs and developers), and (3) developing a long term growth plan inclusive of a new commercial corridor.

Mayor Kelly responded (1) keeping public safety issues in front of the public, (2) identifying housing and growth opportunities that are coordinated and include incentives for developers, less regulations and more expeditious and amenable permit processing (or create a working group focused on coordinated and managed growth), and (3) focus internally on City infrastructure and space needs to position the City government for responsible growth.

Break 3:33 – 3:54 p.m.

What are the top agreed upon issues/priorities of the commission in the next 12-18 months? Why do these priorities matter? What do you want to look back on and say you have accomplished?

A roundtable discussion followed. Items of commonality that the Commission collectively focused on were:

- Promote, educate and take action on the viability, sustainability and efficacy of the Police and Fire Departments
 - Explore the option of a Public Safety Levy
 - Approve and implement appropriate Crime Task Force recommendations
- Commit to an intentional approach to the housing issue with community partners
- Continue to work with community partners and the City's development review process to ensure Great Falls is a growing, business friendly community

JOURNAL OF SPECIAL CITY COMMISSION WORK SESSION MEETING
The Ranches at Belt Creek, 277 Armington Road, Belt, MT
February 23, 2022

- Focus on City facilities and resources

What ideas do you have on the criteria used to prioritize the ARPA/Cares money?

The Commission commenced a roundtable discussion, and collectively set forth:

Use of ARPA/Cares:

- Allocations are one time only
- Helps the most people affected by Covid
- Has a long-term impact
- Is the only way to get funding (making sure funds couldn't come from somewhere else)
- ARPA – low income
- Make an impact with things the City couldn't otherwise do

When people talk about the City Commission, what do you want them to say?

The Commission discussed being excited about the solid plan and continuing the momentum, and working effectively to make things happen. They want people to think this Commission got things done.

WRAP UP AND NEXT STEPS

Manager Doyon was directed to add Great Falls International Airport (GFIA) Funding Commitment to the next Commission meeting agenda for Commission consideration and action on allocating ARPA funds to GFIA to assist with their Great Falls International Airport Low Cost Airfare Initiative (SCASD) grant.

ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the informal special Commission Work Session of February 23, 2022, adjourned at 4:58 p.m.